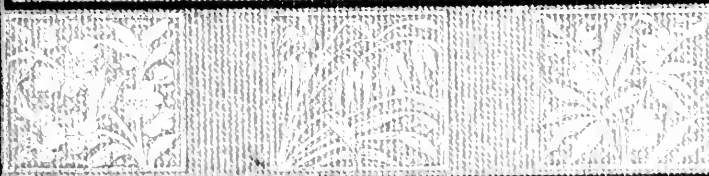


A BOOK OF
SELECTED POEMS
BY
JOHN W. CHADWICK

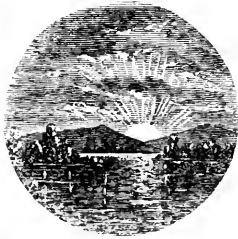




A

BY

JOHN W. CHADWICK.



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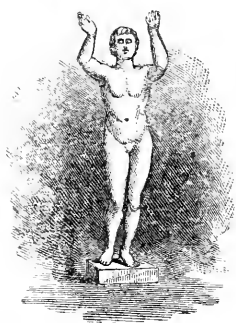
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TENTH EDITION REVISED AND ENLARGED.

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*To one all honesty and truth,
To one all tenderness and love,—
Father and Mother, — and to one
Who dwells with happy saints above ; —
Thou, Sister, who wast more to me
Than lips of mine can ever say ;
Dispeller of my darkest night,
Dear prophet of my better day ;
To one who calls me Brother still,
Most kind to me and all of mine,
Strong to uphold in time of need
Though tremulous as the clinging vine ;
To one who full of years and grace
Still called me by my earliest name,
Whose simple praise I counted more
Than any hollow voice of fame ;
To one, of all my friends most dear,
A spirit brave and wise and good,
Whose love has made me more a man,
And made God's love more understood ;
And two, — of such the kingdom is, —
Whose winsome prattle helps me more
Than aught that I have ever gleaned
From Bible-text or scholar's lore ;
But most of all, to one whose hand
Lies close in mine where'er I roam ;
My sternest critic, safest guide,
The dear wife-angel of my home.*



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POEMS OF NATURE.

POEMS OF NATURE.



MY BARNACLES.



NOT those whose life is hid with God
In the unfathomed sea ;
Not those which gleam so milky-white
Under my dory's lee,

As o'er her side I softly lean,
And watch the life below, —
The strange, fair things which there abide,
And those which come and go.

Nor call I mine the crowds that cling
To many a venturous keel, —
A mimic world, whose tiny folk
Through ocean spaces steal.

Mine are the little creatures left
By the retreating sea,
Who long for it to come again,
So masterful and free.

It goes : the hot sun scorches them,
And lovers' careless feet
Tread them to death, as if no life
But theirs were passing sweet.

It comes : it woos, it kisses them ;
It drenches them with love ;
It is a presence everywhere, —
Around, beneath, above.

And these are mine by lover's right ;
And, when the tide is low,
Down to its edge with scooping hands
Or cup of shell I go,

And dip the briny waters up,
And bear them back to give
To these wee things that long for them
As dying men to live.

How eagerly their shells dispart
To take the moisture in !
And do I hear a tiny laugh, —
The faintest, merriest din ?

What think they of the sudden draught ?
That 'tis the coming sea ?
A little wave sent on before
The mighty company ?

And when they know it is not that,
Do they reproach the hand
Which brings the broken promise up
From the wave-beaten strand?

Believe it not : they know the step
Of the advancing sea,
Better than maidens know the feet
That come so stealthily.

They take, with thanks, the human help,
And still with patience wait
For the vast love to come and fill
The void it doth create.

So wait our souls on Thee, O God !
Their longing is from Thee :
All human help must ever hint
At Thy sufficiency.

Come as the ocean comes, to give
Its energy divine ;
Fold us in Thy encircling arms,
And make us wholly Thine.

MARBLEHEAD, August, 1871.

WHITSUNTIDE.



UT from the city's flaming heart,
Miles but a dozen away,
I know of a mountain's secret shrine,
Where lately I went to pray.

But my prayer was not for the smallest boon :
It was nothing but thanks and joy,
As I roamed through the scented woodland paths
With the heart of a happy boy ;

As I touched the tips of the maple-boughs,
Shaded with softest brown ;
As the thistle showed me her armature,
Frosted with silvery down.

And, oh ! the gleam of the birches' stems,
And the new green of the pines,
And the hemlock fringes sweeping low,
Till they touched the creeping vines !

And every bank was studded thick
With wild flowers sweet and rare ;
While the ferns seemed made of spirit-stuff,
They were so slight and fair.

And the city was gleaming far away
Through a veil of thin white mist,
And billows of green rolled in between,
Till the land and the water kissed.

It was only a dozen miles away,
As flies the laden bee,
But to my free thought 'twas a hundred leagues,
And more, to the shining sea.

Could it be, I thought, in the world with this
There was dust and heat and glare ?
Could it be there was sorrow and hate and sin,
And terror and wild despair ?

Alas ! it could ; but for this one day
I would live as if it could not ;
I would dream that the world, from end to end,
Was only this one dear spot.

All should be sweet and cool and pure ;
All should be gay and free ;
All men be as gentle, all women as true
As the man and the woman with me.

They had lived with the birds and the flowers so long
They seemed to have learned their speech :
Softer it fell on my drowsy sense
Than the rain on a sandy beach.

They could call the trees and the flowers by name ;
They could tell me of all their times ;
And their talk was a poem that needed not
The help of a poet's rhymes.

Where was the service that day, think you ?
Down in the valley below,
Where the sweet-toned bell of the village church
Was swinging to and fro ;

Or was it there, on the mountain-side,
Where the Spirit, with two or three,
Was saying softly, in various speech,
“ Let the little ones come unto me ? ”

1872.



BY THE SEA-SHORE.



HE curvèd strand
Of cool, gray sand
Lies like a sickle by the sea ;
The tide is low,
But soft and slow
Is creeping higher up the lea.

The beach-birds fleet,
With twinkling feet,
Hurry and scurry to and fro,
And sip, and chat
Of this and that
Which you and I may never know.

The runlets gay,
That haste away
To meet each snowy-bosomed crest,
Enrich the shore
With fleeting store
Of art-defying arabesque.

Each higher wave
Doth touch and lave
A million pebbles smooth and bright ;
Straightway they grow
A beauteous show,
With hues unknown before bedight.

High up the beach,
Far out of reach
Of common tides that ebb and flow,
The drift-wood's heap
Doth record keep
Of storms that perished long ago.

Nor storms alone :
I hear the moan
Of voices choked by dashing brine,
When sunken rock
Or tempest shock
Crushed the good vessel's oaken spine.

Where ends the beach,
The cliffs upreach
Their lichen'd bastions centuries old ;
And here I rest,
While all the west
Grows brighter with the sunset's gold.

Far out at sea,
The ships that flee
Along the dim horizon's line
Their sails unfold
Like cloth of gold,
Transfigured by that light divine.

A calm more deep,
As 'twere asleep,
Upon the weary ocean falls ;
So low it sighs,
Its murmur dies,
While shrill the boding cricket calls.

O peace and rest !
Upon the breast
Of God himself I seem to lean,
No break, no bar
Of sun or star :
Just God and I, with naught between.

Oh, when some day
In vain I pray
For days like this to come again,
I shall rejoice
With heart and voice
That one such day has ever been.

NIRVANA.



LONG the scholar's glowing page
I read the Orient thinker's dream
Of things that are not what they seem,
Of mystic chant and Soma's rage.

The sunlight flooding all the room
To me again was Indra's smile,
And on the hearth the blazing pile
For Agni's sake did fret and fume.

Yet most I read of who aspire
To win Nirvana's deep repose, —
Of that long way the spirit goes
To reach the absence of desire.

But through the music of my book
Another music smote my ear, —
A tinkle silver-sweet and clear, —
The babble of the mountain-brook.

“ Oh ! leave,” it said, “ your ancient seers ;
Come out into the woods with me ;
Behold an older mystery
Than Buddhist’s hope or Brahman’s fears !

The voice so sweet I could but hear.
I sallied forth, with staff in hand,
Where, mile on mile, the mountain land
Was radiant with the dying year.

I heard the startled partridge whirr,
And crinkling through the tender grass
I saw the striped adder pass,
Where dropped the chestnut’s prickly burr

I saw the miracle of life
From death upspringing evermore ;
The fallen tree a forest bore
Of tiny forms with beauty rife.

I gathered mosses rare and sweet,
The acorn in its carven cup ;
’ Mid heaps of leaves, wind-gathered up
I trod with half-remorseful feet.

The maple’s blush I made my own,
The sumac’s crimson splendor bold,
The poplar’s hue of paly gold,
The faded chestnut, crisp and brown.

I climbed the mountain's shaggy crest,
Where masses huge of molten rock,
After long years of pain and shock,
Fern-covered, from their wanderings rest.

Far, far below the valley spread
Its rich, roof-dotted, wide expanse ;
And further still the sunlight's dance
The amorous river gayly led.

But, still, with all I heard or saw
There mingled thoughts of that old time,
And that enchanted Eastern clime
Where Buddha gave his mystic law, —

Till, wearied with the lengthy way,
I found a spot where all was still,
Just as the sun behind the hill
Was making bright the parting day.

On either side the mountains stood,
Masses of color rich and warm ;
And over them, in giant form,
The rosy moon serenely glowed.

My heart was full as it could hold ;
The Buddha's paradise was mine ;
My mountain-nook its inmost shrine,
The fretted sky its roof of gold.

Nirvana's peace my soul had found, —
Absence complete of all desire, —
While the great moon was mounting higher
And deeper quiet breathed around.

CATSKILLS, October, 1872.

ALL FOR EACH.



SIT on the rocky headland
That juts from the queer old town,
Where the lichen-covered ledges
To meet the tides run down.

There are voices of children ringing
Through the still morning air,
And a lusty cock is crowing,
And, down on the water there,

A single rower is fretting
The sea with a gentle sound,
And the breath of an ended summer
Is whispering around.

The grasses seem to hear it,
And shudder as if with pain ;
It is full of a sad foreboding
Of the Jotuns' icy reign.

The dories sway at their moorings,
As they catch the fitful breeze ;
And they sidle against each other,
As if themselves to please.

But 'tis only me they are pleasing, —
The picture is all for me, —
And the gray clouds sailing over,
And the sunlight on the sea ;

And the white sails of the vessels,
That gleam in the morning sun ;
And the sounds of far-off labor,
And the shadows cold and dun ;

And the butterfly, knowing surely
That summer is ended for him ;
And the bee, that must wander widely
To fill his sacs to the brim.

And mine is the insect's rapture,
And mine is the sea-gull's pride,
As he sees his whiteness mirrored
Far down in the gleaming tide.

And all the ships in the offing,
Outward and inward bound,
Are mine, and with my ventures
Go sailing the world around.

And these are but one day's riches,
The gatherings of an hour ;
But every day is mighty,
Each night is a night of power.

For all of the brown old planet,
All of the deep blue sky,
All that the ear can harken,
All that can fill the eye,

Is mine by the Law of Beauty ;
And men may give or withhold,
When He who is God of Beauty
Her secret to us has told.

MARBLEHEAD, September, 1873.



RAIN AFTER DROUGHT.



FEW short hours ago, and all the land
Lay as in fever, faint and parched with
drought ;
And so had lain, while many a weary day
Dragged the long horror of its minutes out.

The juiceless fruits fell from the dusty trees ;
The farmer doubted if the Lord was good,
As, sad, he watched the labor of his hands
Made useless by the Day-god's fiery mood.

The hot streets sickened in the burning glare ;
The roadsides lost the glory of their green ;
No second growth sprang up to glad the eye,
Where once the mower with his scythe had been.

A few short hours ago ! And now, behold,
Freshness and beauty gleam on every side ;
The earth has drunk its fill, and all about
The amber pools are stretching far and wide.

A million drops are flashing in the sun ;
The springs far down the upper wonder know ;
The farmer laughs, and little cares how fast
Through his torn hat the cooling streamlets flow.

And all the fields and pastures seem to say,
With joyous smile that I shall ne'er forget,
And all the flowers and trees in chorus join,
“ We knew 'twould come ! He never failed us yet.”

God of my life, as God of all beside,
This lovely wonder, which Thy hand hath wrought,
Quickens in thought the mercies manifold
Which Thy great love into my soul hath brought.

For I have lain, full oft, as hot and dry
As ever earth in summer's fiercest hour ;
And the long days, slow creeping over me,
Brought me no tokens of Thy gracious power.

Then, at Thy word, down fell Thy spirit-rain ;
I felt its coolness all my being through ;
Made fresh and clean and joyous every whit,
I heard the whisper, “ I make all things new.”

But mine, alas ! was not the holy faith
The parched earth felt through all her thirsty hours
I was in fear that never more again
Should I be quickened by the heavenly powers.

So shall it be no more ; but though I lie
For many days as one Thou dost forget,
Recalling this glad hour, my heart shall say,
“ I know 'twill come ! He never failed me yet.”

MARBLEHEAD, August, 1870.

SEA-SORCERY.



HEERILY blew the soft mid-summer wind,
And morn' first freshness had not left the
sky,
As our small craft shot past the harbor-buoy
And left the light-house far upon the lee,
And stood right out into the glistening bay ;
Leaving behind the sad and sullen roar
Of the great waves that broke upon the rocks,
Tossing the rock-weed madly to and fro ;
Leaving behind the voices clear and sweet
Of happy children playing on the beach,
And the one ancient, immemorial man
Whose dory rocked amid the boiling surf,
While he, as ever, sat with eyes cast down,
Wondering what luck his lines would bring that day.
Dimmer and dimmer grew the distant shore ;
Down dropped the spires below the violet line
Where sea and sky were married into one,
And still we sailed.

And more and more there fell
Upon our spirits such a subtle charm,
So weird a spell of sea-wrought sorcery,
That all things seemed unto our spirits strange.
Strange seemed the sky above, and strange the sea,
And strange the vessels flitting to and fro
Across the bay. Strange seemed we each to each
And to ourselves ; and, when our voices smote
The stillness, half they seemed like voices heard
In lives long gone, or lives that were to be.
Little we spoke, and less of words our own ;
But now and then some poet's music heard
In that old time before we sailed away,
It might have been a hundred years ago.
Dream-like grew all the past, until it seemed
To be no past of ours.

But when the sun
Began to linger towards the western verge,
We turned our prow and bade him be our guide ;
Yet more in doubt than faith that we should find
The land from which we once had sailed away, —
Ay, whether such a land there was at all,
Save as some baseless phantom of our brains.
And when again we heard the roaring surf,
And saw the old, familiar, storm-bleached crags,
And the long curve of pebbly beach beyond,
The wonder grew, till it was keen as pain,
Whether indeed we sailed away that morn,

Or in some dim gray morning of the world ;
Whether some few brief hours had flitted by
Between the morning and the evening stars,
Or generations had arrived and gone,
And states had fallen 'mid the crash of arms,
And justice grown more ample on the earth.
There sat the ancient, immemorial man,
Tending his line amid the boiling surf,
And still the charm was not dissolvèd quite :
So long had he been there, it seemed not strange
That he should sit a thousand years or more,
Paying no heed to aught that passed him by.
At length our moorings reached, our anchor dropped,
Amid a crowd we stood upon the shore, —
A crowd whose faces looked a trifle strange ;
Till from among them came a little child,
And put her hand in mine and lifted up
Her face for kisses. Then the charm was snapped ;
And I went homeward, glad to be restored
To the firm earth and its familiar ways.

1876.



THE GOLDEN-ROBIN'S NEST.



HE golden-robin came to build his nest
High in the elm-tree's ever-nodding crest ;
All the long day, upon his task intent,
Backward and forward busily he went,

Gathering from far and near the tiny shreds
That birdies weave for little birdies' beds ;
Now bits of grass, now bits of vagrant string,
And now some queerer, dearer sort of thing.

For on the lawn, where he was wont to come
In search of stuff to build his pretty home,
We dropped one day a lock of golden hair
Which our wee darling easily could spare ;

And close beside it tenderly we placed
A lock that had the stooping shoulders graced
Of her old grandsire ; it was white as snow,
Or cherry-trees when they are all ablow.

Then throve the golden-robin's work apace ;
Hundreds of times he sought the lucky place
Where sure, he thought, in his bird-fashion dim,
Wondrous provision had been made for him.

Both locks, the white and golden, disappeared ;
The nest was finished, and the brood was reared ;
And then there came a pleasant summer's day
When the last golden-robin flew away.

Ere long, in triumph, from its leafy height,
We bore the nest so wonderfully dight,
And saw how prettily the white and gold
Made warp and woof of many a gleaming fold.

But when again the golden-robins came,
Cleaving the orchards with their breasts aflame,
Grandsire's white locks and baby's golden head
Were lying low, both in one grassy bed.

And so more dear than ever is the nest
Ta'en from the elm-tree's ever nodding crest.
Little the golden-robin thought how rare
A thing he wrought of white and golden hair !

JULY, 1874.

TO THE SEA.



THOU that art so nearly infinite !
Lashing thy shores that drip with tangled
weed !
Listening to thy deep voice, another speaks
And tells me of the Infinite indeed.

Thy hollow caves are voiceful with His name,
Whose love is deeper than thy deepest place,
Whose inspirations are more strong and free
Than the great storms that oversweep thy face.

Oh, never time was yet, since first He made
The purple pillars of thy farthest bound,
That thou didst cease from murmuring to the shore,
And wooing it with sweet and holy sound.

And He that is the shoreless Infinite,
And I that am an island on His breast,
Live in such wise that evermore he woos
My soul and fills it with his great unrest.

And as I hear thy voice, may He my prayer,
That I may listen while His music beats,
And, like the sea-shell, murmur back again
That which once heard it evermore repeats.

So shall my life as bravely fashioned be
As are these pebbles on thy shining strand ;
So shall my soul, as do thy countless waves,
Make haste to do His uttermost command.

RHODODENDRONS.



YOU great beauties, who can ever know
How passing fair you are to look upon !
I, 'mid your glories slowly wandering on,
And almost faint with joy that you can glow
With hues so rich and varied, row on row,
A corner in my heart for him alone
Must keep, who hath in your fair petals shown
Such things to us as never had been so
But for his loving patience, sweet and long ;
Ay, and no less to the clear eye of God,
Which never yet in all His endless years,
Till you out-bloomed in colors pure as song,
Had seen such fairness springing from the sod
As this which fills our eyes with happy tears.

A SEPTEMBER GALE.



LOSE as a limpet clinging to the rocks,
Battered and drenched by the remorseless
gale,

I watch the wild commotion it has made,
Through the dim twilight peering eagerly.
The waves are running higher than the masts
Of the small craft they drive so swift along,
Driven themselves by the loud-cracking whip
Of the fierce wind, and chasing each the next
With foam, like hair, blown wild before the blast.
That flying fringe of foam from every wave
Is like the breath of restless, fiery steeds,
As from their quivering nostrils it is driven
'Gainst the hot flanks that steam just on before,
When all the field is torn with flying hoofs,
And all the air is full of cheering cries,
A moment ere the hosts in battle join.
The waves, like steeds, are pawing at the rocks,
And snorting loud and roaring as in pain ;
While, like a streamer long, the flying spray

Tugs at the harbor-buoy, and like a dog
In leash, or tiger chained, at every pier
Some vessel strains and frets and chafes in vain.
And there are cries of quick and sharp command,
Thick-spiced with oaths, borne shoreward on the wind
From schooners' decks as they drift hopelessly,
Dragging their anchors at their cables' length,
To dash, at last, upon the pitiless rocks
And strew their tackle on the whelming sea.
And, as I watch the elemental rage,
My heart is wild with joy and ecstasy.

Now all is dark, and now a sudden flash
Of lightning from an ebon mass of cloud
Turns every crest to gold ; to gold the masts
Of every vessel hurrying to her doom ;
To gold the light-house at the harbor's mouth,
Sending its steadfast warning o'er the bay ;
And by that flash I see, not far away,
A woman's face, as pale as palest death,
And haggard, too, with speechless agony.
My joy is done. O woman, Heaven keep
Thy husband 'mid the smiting of the seas,
And bring him safely to thine arms again,
And to the mute caresses of his babes !

MARBLEHEAD, September, 1874.

STORM AND SHINE.

I.



NOTHER sunless, dreary, weary day !

How the poor tree-tops shiver ! The dead
leaves

Fall sullenly upon the rain-soaked earth ;

Loud and more loud the wild nor'easter grieves.

And can it be that ever sunlight shone ?

And can it be that ever skies were blue ?

And can it be that ever breezes soft

The windward bee scarce hindered as he flew ?

And what if nevermore the earth should lie

By the warm wind enchanted and caressed ?

And what if this gray shroud which now she wears

Were that of her last, long, eternal rest ?

II.

Was ever day so beautiful as this ?

Was ever wind so soft, or sky so fair ?

Was ever grass so green, and all the world

So fresh and pure and sweet beyond compare ?

How the glad tree-tops glisten in the sun !
How, tilting there, the robin flings abroad
A song so gay that all the earth through him
Seems giving thanks and praises to our God !

And can it be that skies were ever dark ?
That sunlight ever was desired in vain ?
That ever fell, day after weary day,
The hoarded torrents of the cheerless rain ?

So beautiful, it seems it cannot die !
Or die but to bring others to their birth, —
Days fair as this, that with unending joy
Shall stir the pulses of the happy earth.

CHESTERFIELD, 1882.



IN DOG-DAYS.



SEE the landscape tremble in the heat,
I hear the murmur of the rustling trees ;
I close my eyes, and to myself I seem
As one who floats 'mid odorous Indian seas.
Scarce draw the sails in the dull opiate air ;
Scarce stirs the breeze the opalescent calm ;
Upon the sleeping islands that we pass,
Scarce move the fringes of the shadowy palm.
And, as I sail, I seem to hear the voice
Of one who reads some drowsy Eastern tale,
Telling of men untouched of all the ills
Which for our hands and for our hearts prevail ;
Ay, to be living in those days I seem,
And in those days still dreaming that I dream.

CHESTERFIELD, 1881.

WAKEFUL.



THOU that bringest sweet surcease from care,
Long have I sought thy drowsy spell in vain ;
Yet less, that yonder hoarsely-shrieking train
Doth to invade these sacred precincts dare,
Than that a thousand images most fair
Are thronging all the spaces of my brain, —
Visions of beauty without fleck or stain,
Born of the day's delight beyond compare.
For once I chide thee not that thou dost stay.
Better than thee these memories vague and sweet
Of joys that filled the heart of all the day,
Made yet more dear because they were so fleet,
And thanks more still than faintliest whispered prayer
To Him whose love hath made the world so fair.

WHITE MOUNTAINS, 1875.

MONADNOCK.



HE merest bulge above the horizon's rim
Of purplish blue, which you might think a cloud
Low lying there, — that is Monadnock proud,
Full seventy miles away. But far and dim
Although it be, I still can without glass
Descry, as I were standing happy there
Upon the topmost ledges gray and bare,
Something which with the shadows will not pass, —
A vision that abides : a fair young girl
Lying her length ; her hair all disarrayed
By the bold mountain wind ; her cheeks aglow ;
As if that rocky summit should unfurl
A rose of June ! And what if I had said,
“ Thrice fair Monadnock with her lying so ! ”

CHESTERFIELD, August 24, 1879.

LEAVE-TAKING.



HIS is the trysting-place ; from day to day,
Without so much as willing to be here,
The laughing hours have seen me at thy side,
Because thou art so beautiful and dear.

But this day is the last. To-morrow morn
Back to the city's mournful streets I hie,
There to be cheated by the art of man
Of God's inheritance of air and sky.

But oh ! for once thou art too beautiful !
Thy beauty makes it agony to part.
Sea, thou art cruel, so, on this last day,
To try the weakness of thy lover's heart.

To-day, methinks, thou need'st not so have smiled,
Like some proud beauty, full of high disdain ;
Oh ! hide thy fairness with some misty veil,
And lighten so the burden of my pain.

Nay, do not hearken, for there is no need ;
This sudden rush of tears will do as well :
One more last look, and then thy voice shall sound
As sounds, far off, some solemn vesper-bell.

But something of thy freshness in my heart
Will linger still, and permanently bless ;
And I shall hear, 'mid things that come and go,
The murmur of thy everlastingness.

SEPTEMBER, 1873.

"HIS COMPASSIONS FAIL NOT."



HE farmer chides the tardy spring,
The sun withholds his wonted ray,
The days are dull and cold and gray
No shadow doth the maple fling.

From snow-clad peaks and icy main,
The north wind cometh wet and chill,
And evermore the clouds distil
The hoarded treasure of the rain.

But still, O miracle of good !
The crocus springs, the violets peep,
The straggling vines begin to creep,
The dandelion gilds the sod.

The rain may fall in constant showers,
The south-wind tarry on its way ;
But through the night and through the day
Advance the summer's fragrant hours.

And though the north-wind force him back,
The song-bird hurries from the South,
With summer's music in his mouth,
And studs with songs his airy track.

What then, my soul, if thou must know
Thy days of darkness, gloom and cold,
If joy its ruddy beams withhold,
And grief compels my tears to flow ?

And what if, when with bended form
I praise the gods for sorrows past,
There ever comes a fiercer blast,
And darker ruin of the storm ?

As tarry not the flowers of June
For all the ill the heavens can do,
And, to their inmost natures true,
The birds rejoice in sweetest tune :

So, Father, shall it be with me ;
And whether winds blow foul or fair,
Through want and woe, and toil and care,
Still will I struggle up to Thee ;

That, though my winter days be long,
And brighter skies refuse to come,
My life no less may sweetly bloom,
And none the less be full of song.

BROOKLYN, 1868.

SEA-BORN VENUS.



WONDER not men fabled as they did,
In that old rapture of Hellenic days,
Of Venus as the daughter of the Sea,
From its white foam upspringing, full of
grace.

For I have watched thy beauty hour by hour,
Lying at thy dear side all hushed and still,
Bidding thee work on me thy secret spells,
And with thy fulness all my being fill.

“ Ay, sea-born beauty, but how sea-born love ? ”
I hear the doubter question and confess.
But who, still young, has wandered by thy side,
The old Hellenic riddle well may guess.

Thou art the mother of all tender thoughts,
Of longings and of infinite desires ;
The yearning of thy never-ending plaint
A kindred yearning in our souls inspires.

When youths and maidens walk thy shining strand,
And listen to thy harmonies and hymns,
There is a mist that is not of the sea
That gathers fast and all their vision dims.

Their speech is silence, but it tells a tale
Of that which makes the merry world go round ;
Thou dost interpret for them every thought
Which, sudden, they in their fresh hearts have found

And so thou art the lover's go-between ;
So love that knows itself is born of thee ;
And hearts already pledged become more fond
While listening to thy murmurings, O Sea !

Ay, love is born of thee, and deeper love
Than ever flows to any human goal, —
Love of that Spirit who in every tide
Hints at the deeper currents of the soul.

We love thee best, since thou art type of Him :
Thou freshening earth as she through space is hurled,
And He, the ocean of the universe,
Freshening for aye the courses of the world.

"WHAT DO I KNOW?"

Motto on Montaigne's seal.



PON this heaven-kissing hill,
On this mid-summer day of days,
That sad old question shoulders in
Among my thoughts of prayer and praise,

What do I know? Not much, alas !
Of all the breadth and depth and height
That presses upon soul and sense
From day to day, from night to night.

And yet I know the light is sweet,
And pleasant 'tis to see the sun, —
What time he climbs the eastern hills,
And when his course is nearly done.

I know the look of wind-blown grass,
The quiet rustle of the corn,
The lusty song the thrasher sings
To usher in the glowing morn.

I know to what a merry tune
Yon river ripples on its way,
And how, along its leafy brink,
The drooping branches softly sway.

I know the springs that trickle down
Through many a rod of brush and fern,
Divinely cool, nor Zeus himself
Drank better drink from Hebe's urn.

I know what fine enchantments lurk
In clouds that trail their shadows dun
O'er hill and vale, or lie at ease
Along the west at set of sun.

I know the night is calm and cool,
And welcome when the day is spent ;
And when it fills the sky with stars,
Fills all my soul with sweet content.

But in the worlds of thought and love
Yet more and better things I know
Than this mid-summer day of days,
For all its treasures, has to show.

I know that many friends are kind,
That many hearts are fond and true ;
I know — but hush ! I may not tell
The half I know, Montaigne, to you.

Wherefore, O skeptic, go and try
Your question in some other ear ;
I know enough to keep my heart
Brimful of joy from year to year.

CHESTERFIELD, MASS., July, 1875.

WORKS AND DAYS.



O break the gently undulating sea
With oars it seems to fondle lovingly,
And watch the eddies as they circle back
Along my winding track.

To rest upon my oars, and, as I glide
With wind and current, in the cooling tide
To dip my hands, while something seems to say
Within me, "Let us pray."

As near as may be to the fringed shore
To keep my boat, and lean her gunnel o'er,
Watching the many-colored floor, untrod
Save by the feet of God.

His ways are in the deep ; His sunlight, too,
Pierces its deeps of shadow through and through.
And touches many a wonder that abides
Below the lowest tides.

How beautiful the sunlight on the sea,
When waves by millions twinkle as in glee !
But 'tis the sunlight *in* the sea whose gleam
To me doth fairest seem.

It glorifies the pebbles with its rays ;
It turns gray sand to perfect chrysoprase ;
Plays with the amber tresses of the rocks
As with a maiden's locks.

Anon in some sequestered nook I lie,
And see the yachts, white-winged, go sailing by,
And feel, whichever quickest onward flies,
Mine is the truest prize.

I watch the race with neither hope nor fear,
Since none than other is to me more dear ;
My prize the perfect beauty of the sight, —
Unselfish, pure delight.

I sit and wonder what the cliffs would say
If they could speak, remembering the day
When first, "Thus far, no farther," it was said ;
"Here thy proud waves be stayed !"

Since then what laughter and what cry and moan
The sea has offered up to them alone !
What suns have kissed, what storms have left their
blight !
What silence of the night !

So wondering, how strange it is and still,
Save where, a mile away, the drogers fill
'Their battered dories with the shingly store
Of the long-hoarding shore !

That far-off sound is but a gauge that tells
How deep the silence is ; like Sunday bells
Which, ringing, tell the resting village o'er
How still it was before.

These are my works and days : in these I drown
The cares and troubles of the noisy town,
And let it seethe and rumble as it may,
Day after weary day.

But when the summer days are sweetly fled,
And great fall clouds go floating overhead ;
When asters lurk along the pleasant ways
With golden-rod ablaze ;

Then I will back again to faces see
Than all these sights more beautiful to me ;
Where friendliest voices wait for me to hear,
Than all these sounds more dear.

CROW'S NEST.



BUILDING our beacon fire, we spread our feast
On the bare cliff high up against the sky ;
Eastward a few lone clouds went sailing by,
As more and more the sunset glow increased,
And every sound of bird and leaf had ceased ;
Far down below, we could the stream espy,
Seeming at rest all motionless to lie ;
And life from every burden seemed released.
Range beyond range, we saw the wooded heights ;
And far away, backed against paly gold,
Their rightful lords — unspeakable delights ! —
Their purple splendor sturdily uphold,
While climbing slow, the moon and eve's first star
Led every thought to heights more cool and far.

WHITE MOUNTAINS, 1875.

IN JUNE.

“ I show you a mystery.”



FRIEND, your face I cannot see,
Your voice I cannot hear,
But for us both breaks at our feet
The flood-tide of the year ;—
The summer-tide all beautiful
With fragrance, and with song
Sung by the happy-hearted birds
To cheer the months along.

And so the mystery I show
Is this, all simple-sweet :
Because God's summer-tide so breaks
At yours and at my feet,
We're not so very far apart
As it at first would seem ;
We're near each other *in the Lord* ;
The miles are all a dream.

JUNE 19, 1873.

A SONG FOR THE HARVEST.



OME, list to a song for the Harvest :
Thanksgiving and honor and praise
For all that the bountiful Giver
Hath given to gladden our days.

For the grain and the corn in their plenty,
For the grapes that were gathered with song ;
For pumpkins so brave with their yellow,
They had lived upon sunbeams so long ;

For cranberries down in the meadow,
And the buckwheat that flames on the hill,
And blueberries tempting the children
To wander and pick them at will ;

For the peaches that blush through their pallor,
Or glow like a pretty quadroon,
As they dream of the sun in the morning,
Or welcome his kisses at noon ;

For the sweet-smelling hay and the clover,
That sweeten the breath of the kine ;
And the apples that lingered, as dreading
The air and the light to resign.

And not for the fruit-harvest only
We offer our thanks and our praise ;
Not less have the leaves and the blossoms
Made better and brighter the days.

The leaves that delight with their greenness,
That soften the heat with their shade,
And rustle so crisply in Autumn,
To startle the lover and maid.

For the blossoms that whiten in May-time
The ground, as with snow, as they fall ;
For the flowerets that whisper their meanings
In cottage and hovel and hall.

Ay, thanks for the harvest of Beauty !
For that which the hands cannot hold !
The harvest eyes only can gather,
Which only our hearts can enfold !

We have reaped it on mountain and moorland ;
We have gleaned it from meadow and lea ;
We have garnered it in from the cloudlands ;
We have bound it in sheaves from the sea

And thanks that the whole of the harvest
Is not for the children of men ;
That the birds and the beasts are remembered,
The dwellers in river and fen ;

That He giveth them meat in due season,
And heareth their cry when they call, —
The tiniest, weakest among them,
The hugest and strongest of all.

But the song it goes deeper and higher ;
There are harvests which eye cannot see :
They ripen on mountains of Duty,
They are reaped by the brave and the free.

And these have been gathered and garnered ;
Some golden with honor and gain,
And some as with heart's-blood made ruddy,
The harvests of sorrow and pain.

Alas, for our pitiful singing !
For all it has lasted so long,
The half of our rapture and wonder
Has not been expressed in our song.

But He who is Lord of the Harvest —
The Giver who gladdens our days —
Will know if our hearts are repeating,
Thanksgiving and honor and praise.

SNOW-MAIDENS.



WINTER day upon the hill

Where we our summer joyance took,
And all things to our pleasure bent
As willows to a winding brook.

And there, upon the spot that knew
Of baby joy and maiden grace,
Whirling about in ghostly dance,
Are creatures of another race.

Tall, pale, and wonderfully fair,
The chilly sunlight through them shines :
They dance with interwoven curves ;
They move in wavy, mystic lines.

Weird sisterhood, your secret tell !
Are ye the ghosts of vanished days, —
Of joys that will no more return,
Of summers sweeter than all praise, —

Of hours when earth and heaven seemed
To meet and touch and interblend,
And, face to face, we talked with God,
As friend most dear with dearest friend?

O foolish heart, be not afraid.
 No plaint, but prophecy, is here ;
 The spring shall come, and Life and Love
 Shall crown another golden year.

CHESTERFIELD, 1879.

A SONNET FOR THE DAY

FOR WHICH A WEATHER-PROPHET HAD PREDICTED A TERRIFIC
 STORM.



STORM of sunshine ! How it plays and beats
 On the chill gardens and the frozen sods !
 How the blue heaven seems as if the gods
 Of old with nectarous and ambrosial sweets
 Made holiday ! How the very streets,
 Where fashion pours and weary labor plods,
 Seem to laugh out ! What ! Is 't the golden-rod's
 Midsummer splendor that my vision greets ?
 Nay, 't is the golden sunshine. There is naught
 That can withstand its gracious power.
 The winter's reign is broken from this hour,
 And all its terrors are to nothing brought.
 O heart, my heart, greet thou the opening year,
 Sing with the birds and make a sweeter cheer !

March 9, 1883.

BALD-CAP REVISITED.



LEVEN years, and two fair months beside,
Full to the brim with various love and joy,
My life has known since last I drew apart
Into this huge sky-shouldering mountain dome,
And, listening, heard the winds among the pines
Making a music as of countless choirs,
Chanting in sweet and solemn unison ;
And, standing here where God's artificers,
Angels of frost and fire and sun and storm,
Have made a floor with nameless gems inlaid,
Saw, like a roof, the slopes of living green
Go cleaving down to meet the lower hills, —
Firm-buttressed walls, their bases over-grown
With meadow-sweet and ferns and tangled vines,
And all that makes the road-sides beautiful ;
While, all around me, other domes arose,
Girded with towers and eager pinnacles,
Into the silent and astonished air.
Full oft, since then, up-looking from below,
As naught to me has been the pleasantness
Of meadows broad, and, 'mid them, flowing wide
The Androscoggin's dark empurpled stream,

Enamoured of thine awful loveliness,
Thy draperies of forests overspread
With shadows and with silvery, shining mists,
Thy dark ravines and cloud-conversing top,
Where it would almost seem that one might hear
The talk of angels in the happy blue ;—
And so, in truth, my heart has heard to-day.

Dear sacred Mount, not thine alone the charm
By which thou dost so overmaster me,
But something in thy lover's beating heart,
Something of memories vague and fond and sweet,
Something of what he cannot be again,
Something of sharp regret for vanished joys,
And faces that he may no more behold,
And voices that he listens for in vain,
And feet whose welcome sound he hears no more,
And hands whose touch could make his being thrill
With love's dear rapture of delicious pain, —
Something of all the years that he has lived,
Of all the joy and sorrow he has known,
Since first with eager feet and heart aflame
He struggled up thy steep and shaggy sides,
Sun-flecked, leaf-shaded realms of life in death,
And stood, as now, upon thy topmost crest,
Trembling with joy and tender unto tears ;—
Something of all these things mingles with thee, —
Green of thy leaves and whiteness of thy clouds,

Rush of thy streams and rustle of thy pines, —
With all thy strength and all thy tenderness,
Till thou art loved not for thyself alone,
But for the love of many who are gone,
And most of all for one who still remains
To make all sights more fair, all sounds more sweet,
All life more dear and glad and wonderful.

Eleven years, and thou so little changed !
No change but what the changing season brings ;
For then, in June, thou wast all greenery ;
Now, in September, thou art turning sere,
Or hanging many a leafy banner out,
Blazoned with gold ; and 'mid the sombre rows
Of priest-like pines, along thy forest aisles,
Gleams here and there a red-cloaked cardinal ;
And old decay is covered everywhere
With the fresh-fallen leaves, making such show
As never caliph with his floors entiled
With warmest-hued and shapeliest arabesques.
Thou hast not changed. As it were yesterday
I stood upon thy moss-grown parapet,
Familiar seems each lightning-splintered crag,
Each slope that shimmers in the sunny wind,
Each outer court through which with crackling tread
I pressed into thy presence-chamber vast,
And dared to sit upon thy sculptured throne.
Still through the broad and grassy intervale

The river into which thy torrents run
Flows swiftly on, setting with amethyst
Full many a little emerald-tinted isle,
Past many a pebbly, drought-discovered shoal,
And over many a shallow, rippling ford,
For ever singing as it hurries by,
Impatient to be mingled with the sea.
And still on every side stand reaching up
Into the blue, illimitable air
Thy huge, sky-cleaving, cloud-compelling peers,
Baring their knotted bosoms to the sun.
Still, as of yore, the shadows troop adown
Their mighty slopes, or ever deeper grow
Amid the brawn of every dark ravine.
Thou art not changed ; the same from year to year
Are all thy great and dear companions.
There comes to thee no morn when thou dost miss
This one or that from his accustomed place,
And watch in vain for him to come again.
Would it were so with me ! But, as I gaze
Abroad upon thy stalwart brotherhood,
A dimness comes, which is not of the hills,
Between me and their everlastingness,
To think that since I hailed thy glory first
So many of *my* mates have gone away
Beyond the misty mountain-tops of death,
That well-nigh for each peak I count a grave.
Fades out the valley's peace, the purple glow

That now begins to bathe the distant hills,
And in their stead I see the faces strong
And sweet of dear ones whom I shall not meet again
Until I bid my last farewell to thee.

Dear, mighty friend, oh deem not that I chide
Aught thou hast done to make thyself appear
Spectral and dim, and with thee all thy kin,
And nothing real but those faces pure
That in the infinite space of heart and mind
Press cheek to cheek, so dense the angel-throng ;
As in the backgrounds Raphael loved to paint
For Mary and her wonder-gifted child :
No other service thou couldst render me
Would seem so tender and so good as this.
Yet were my heart ungrateful if alone
Of vanished joys I heard the solemn voice
Of all thy sounds and all thy silences
Soft-speaking, here, as hour succeeds to hour,
Each than the last more rare and mystical.
“ Though much has gone,” thou say’st, “ since first I tried
Thy youthful strength with rigors all unknown,
How much remains ! How much is now thine own
Which then thou hadst no knowledge of or dream !
What joy of friends and books, and perfect days
When earth to heaven seemed nearer than its wont ;
What sacred hours of high companionship ;
What deeper love where love was rife before ;

What faces and what voices from the void,
Shaping themselves for thee to bend and kiss,
Rounding themselves for thee to list and hear ;
What deeper sense of all the mystery
In which thou liest embosomed evermore ! ”

Thou sayest this ? Nay, 'tis no voice of thine.
Not to remember either loss or gain
Do thy enchantments lure the hearts of men.
'Tis their device to use thy beetling crags
For rock-hewn stairs, by which they may ascend
To secret shrines of memory and prayer.
'Tis thine to make them lose themselves in thee ;
Ay, to forget their individual life,
And feel themselves but parts of that which breathes
With thy sweet-scented breath of trees that sway
And rustle in the wind ; of that which creeps
In every lichen's slow and noiseless tread,
Or warms thy heart with ardors of the sun.
Sleep, mind and heart, and let the body wake
And every sense with speechless rapture thrill.
Full soon, somehow, God's wondrous alchemy
The senses' joy shall turn to spirit's praise ;
Seeing that soul and sense are not at war,
But each the other's gentle servitor.
Drink deep, O sense, and there shall come a day
When heart and soul shall share thy freshening.
And for this perfect peace in which I lie,

Bathing myself in heaven's upper air,
Curtained with clouds, with carpets for my feet
Such as the proudest sultan could not buy
With all the hoarded wealth of centuries, —
For this I know, that when — no, not too soon —
Again I thread the city's crowded ways,
And mingle with its mighty swarm of men,
And bend myself to do the tasks I love,
I shall with stouter heart and firmer mind
Pursue my way ; sustained by greater hopes ;
Cheered by a deeper faith in all the world,
And a more loving trust, my God, in Thee.

SHELBURNE, N.H., Sept. 1876.



LOST AND FOUND.



HERE have they gone, the happy summer days,
With all their loveliness of earth and sky,
Which we have seen so gayly passing by,
Till now the last a moment more delays?

Whither have fled their mornings cool and sweet?
Whither their dreamy haze of highest noon?
Whither their sunset glories, and the croon
Of many waters murmuringly fleet?

O friends, dear friends, who have been with me here,
To-night, for all the miles that intervene,
There is no inch of space our hearts between;
Come hark with me a voice of hope and cheer.

These summer days, that have so sweetly fled,
Have their Avallon, wherein they abide,
Like good King Arthur after he had died,
Or seemed to die, when still he was not dead.

It is a quiet place within the heart,
Where they live on for many an after day,
Blessing alike our labor and our play ;
And nevermore from us do they depart.

And when we know not why we are so gay,
And when we laugh, nor know the reason why,
God sees in us a gleam of summer sky,
Or hears some brook go laughing on its way.

And so in you I know God keeps for me
The sweetness of the unreturning days,
Safe from all harm and better than all praise :
Be mine, at least, such immortality.

September 3, 1880.



POEMS OF LIFE AND LOVE.

POEMS OF LIFE AND LOVE.

TÊTE-À-TÊTE.

I.



BIT of ground, a smell of earth,
A pleasant murmur in the trees,
The chirp of birds, an insect's hum,
And, kneeling on their chubby knees,

Two neighbors' children at their play ;
Who has not seen a hundred such ?
A head of gold, a head of brown,
Bending together till they touch.

II.

A country school-house by the road,
A spicy scent of woods anear,
And all the air with summer sounds
Laden for who may care to hear.

So care not two, a boy and girl,
Who stay when all the rest are gone,
Solving a problem deeper far
Than one they seem intent upon.

Dear hearts, of course they do not know
How near their heads together lean.
The bee that wanders through the room
Has hardly space to go between.

III.

Now darker is the head of brown,
The head of gold is brighter now,
And lines of deeper thought and life
Are written upon either brow.

The sense that thrilled their being through
With nameless longings vast and dim
Has found a voice, has found a name,
And where he goes she follows him.

Again their heads are bending near,
And bending down in silent awe
Above a morsel pure and sweet,
A miracle of love and law.

How often shall their heads be bowed
With joy or grief, with love and pride,
As waxeth strong that feeble life,
Or slowly ebbs its falling tide !

IV.

A seaward hill where lie the dead
In dreamless slumber deep and calm ;
Above their graves the roses bloom,
And all the air is full of balm.

They do not smell the roses sweet ;
They do not see the ships that go
Along the far horizon's edge ;
They do not feel the breezes blow.

Here loving hands have gently laid
The neighbors' children, girl and boy,
And man and wife ; head close to head
They sleep, and know nor pain nor joy.

1875.



THE GATE CALLED BEAUTIFUL.

“And they brought a man, lame from his birth, and laid him daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful.”



LAME from his birth ; and who is not as much,
Though in his body he be stout and strong ;
And in his mind an athlete for the truth ;
In conscience, too, a giant against wrong ?

For who that guesses what a man may be,
In all his powers and graces how divine,
And then bethinks him of the thing he is, —
So far below that glory, God, of thine, —

Though he were greatest of the sons of men,
“Why callest thou me good ?” he still would say •
And all the heights already won would point
To higher peaks along the heavenly way.

Lame from our birth ; and daily we are brought,
And at the gate called Beautiful are laid :
Sometimes its wonder makes us free and glad ;
Sometimes its grandeur makes us half afraid.

The gate called Beautiful ; and yet methinks
No word can name it that begins to tell
How soar its pillars to the highest heavens,
And how their roots take hold on lowest hell.

With what designs its panels are inwrought,
O'ertraced with flowers and hills and shining seas,
And glorified by rise and set of suns,
And Junes of blossom and October trees !

So beautiful, yet never quite the same !
The pictures change with every changing hour ;
Or sweeter things come stealing into view,
Which stronger things had hidden by their power.

There all the stars and systems go their way ;
There shines the moon so tender in her grace ;
And there, than moon or star or sun more fair,
The blessed wonder of the human face.

Faces and faces ! some of children sweet ;
And some of maidens fresh and pure and true ;
And some that lovelier are at evening time
Than any can be while the years are few.

This is the gate called Beautiful ; it swings
To music sweeter than was heard that day
When St. Cecilia, rapt in ecstasy,
Heard through her trance the angelic roundelay.

Music of little children at their play ;
Of mothers hushing them to sleep and dreams ;
Of all the birds that sing in all the trees,
Of all the murmuring of all the streams.

And at this gate, not at wide intervals,
Are we, lame from our birth, laid tenderly,
But daily ; and not one day passes by
And we look not upon this mystery.

Gate of the Temple ? surely it is that !
It opens not into vacuity ;
For all its beauty, it is not so fair
But that a greater beauty there can be.

Thy beauty, O my Father ! All is Thine ;
But there is beauty in Thyself, from whence
The beauty Thou hast made doth ever flow
In streams of never-failing affluence.

Thou art the Temple ! and though I am lame, —
Lame from my birth, and shall be till I die, —
I enter through the gate called Beautiful,
And am alone with Thee, O Thou Most High !

REAL AND IDEAL.



LOOKING athwart the valley's cleft,
Where nestles many a cosey farm
Beside the stream whose music low
For ever keeps its ancient charm,

For one I love, who, young and gay,
Full often wandered by its side,
Floating his wayward fancies down
To the great sea upon its tide, —

Looking through dreamy, half-shut eyes
Across to where the shining mist
Bathed all the woods and uplands dim
With purple and with amethyst,

I said, Why do we linger thus
Where all is sharp and bright and clear?
Seek we the pleasant land beyond,
And taste of its enchantments dear.

Agreed ; and soon our faithful grays
Were plunging down the hill-side steep,
Where over lichen-crinkled walls
The tangled thickets nod and creep ;

And past the spring that trickles down
Through ledges thick with brush and furze,
Where aspens show their silver pomp
And chestnuts drop their prickly burrs ;

And o'er the little rattling bridge
That spans the pebbly, murmurous stream,
And on into the land that seemed
The mystic shadow of a dream

And what to find ? The smell of hay
New-mown, and gleam of mowers' scythes,
And purple milkweed hardly seen
For troops of golden butterflies ;

And many a pleasant upland farm,
And many a sun-browned little maid,
And patient cattle half asleep
In many a maple's plenteous shade ;

All this and more ; but here nor there
One atom of the tender mist
That, from afar, had clothed the land
With purple and with amethyst.

But looking backward to the hills
Which we had left an hour before,
Behold the charm we came to seek
Was there! Down-folded softly o'er

Each dear familiar place it lay, —
The violet-tinted mystic haze ;
And there had lain, hour after hour,
Through the long, sweet, mid-summer days ;

While we, in all its splendor clad,
In Tyrian dyes right royally,
Had deemed that we must seek afar
Its perfect grace and mystery.

CHESTERFIELD, MASS., July 19, 1876.

A VINDICATION.



THOU art not proud because thou art so
beautiful.

'Tis falsely said. Thou art but glad of heart
To feel thy glorious beauty is a part
Of all the beauty that is anywhere,
On land or sea or in the gleaming air :
Such gladness is less proud than dutiful.

THE OVER-SOUL.



DLING one day in June, my aimless feet,
Forbidden, crossed the threshold of that fane
By grateful Harvard built for her dear slain,
Whom Freedom counted for her service meet.

Above me rose the glorious sheaf of towers,
As on the snowy tablets, slow, I read
The names of all the generous-hearted dead,
Who were our chivalry's most perfect flowers.

There were the names of men whom all the land
Hailed as the greatest in those dreadful days ;
There, too, their names whose only meed of praise
Was the deep sense of doing God's command.

And one I read, which oft I used to speak
In loving-wise, as friend doth speak with friend :
Brave, ardent spirit ! wheresoever tend
Thy restless feet, thou dost the highest seek.

And, as I gazed, with dimmer sight I saw
 Upon rude stagings high above my head
 The workmen painting words that shall be read
Through countless years of Liberty and Law ;—

Resounding words of that melodious tongue
 Which still doth with the pomp of Virgil swell ;
 But nought of all their meaning could they tell,
Who on the wall their various colors flung.

And some there were who worked in sombre hues,
 While others bravely did illuminate
 With red and gold some word of greater weight ;
But all alike the meaning all did lose.

Behold, I thought, a parable of those
 Whose names are graven on these tablets cold ;
 They did their work, yet little could have told
Of meanings vast which only Heaven knows.

Behold, I thought, a parable of all
 Who do men's work upon this mortal strand ;
 Great meanings which they cannot understand,
They paint and grave on Time's memorial wall.

There are who work in colors dull and cold ;
 There are who work in characters of flame :
 It matters not, the glory is the same ;
For only thus the tale is fitly told,

Which He *can* read who builds all seas above
 So strong that nothing can destroy or mar,
 In every sun, in every circling star,
 The everlasting temple of His love.

CAMBRIDGE, 1874.

CARPE DIEM.



SOUL of mine, how few and short the years
 Ere thou shalt go the way of all thy kind,
 And here no more thy joy or sorrow find
 At any fount of happiness or tears !
 Yea, and how soon shall all that thee endears
 To any heart that beats with love for thee
 Be everywhere forgotten utterly,
 With all thy loves and joys, and hopes and fears !
 But, O my soul, because these things are so,
 Be thou not cheated of to-day's delight.
 When the night cometh, it may well be night ;
 Now it is day. See that no minute's glow
 Of all the shining hours unheeded goes ;
 No fount of rightful joy by thee untasted flows.

“WHY THIS WASTE?”



HAT eyes which pierced our inmost being
through ;
That lips which pressed into a single kiss,
It seemed, a whole eternity of bliss ;
That cheeks which mantled with love's rosy hue ;
That feet which wanted nothing else to do
But run upon love's errands, this and this ;
That hands so fair they had not seemed amiss
Reached down by angels through the deeps of blue ;—
That all of these so deep in earth should lie
While season after season passeth by ;
That things which are so sacred and so sweet
The hungry roots of tree and plant should eat !
Oh for one hour to see as Thou dost see,
My God, how great the recompense must be !

THE GREATEST WONDER



O pleasantly the fleeting days go by,
So much they bring of bliss without alloy,
So much to give my thought and will employ
Whether upon the fragrant turf I lie,
With face upturned and watch some argosy
Of white-sailed clouds, freighted with summer joy,
Or track the fancies that, on wings more coy
Than shyest bird's, explore a deeper sky,
Or converse hold with whom I love the best, —
The greatest wonder that my spirit knows
Is — that with so much gone I am so bless'd?
Ah, no! But from this thought it ever flows:
How could my heart contain its vast delight,
If my lost saints were with me here to-night?

FROM THE INVISIBLE.



ETHOUGHT I walked along a pleasant way,
Sunlight and shadow flecking leaf and sod,
And, hand in my hand, one beside me trod,
Her fair face adding brightness to the day.
Sudden we came upon a hidden door,
And she that walked beside me passed within,
Nor did return. But, where she late had been,
There came a Voice that clamored, "Nevermore!"
That Voice I knew; but straightway, seemingly,
From the shut door a gentle Echo rung,
And "Evermore!" still "Evermore!" it sung,
And ever softer and more dreamingly.
God of the living! from within the door —
No echo — came that blest word, "Evermore" ?

ROWENA DARLING.



HEAP of mortar, brick, and stone,
O'ergrown with shrubs, o'errun with vines :
That here was once a house and home,
How ill the careless sense divines,
Rowena Darling !

Not careless his, my friend's, who loves
To wander in the ancient ways,
To talk of olden times, and — yes —
To celebrate your simple praise,
Rowena Darling.

Here, once upon a time, he tells,
There lived a girl unknown to fame :
The country-side no sweeter knew, —
It could not know a sweeter name, —
Rowena Darling !

Here, where the birches' silver gleam
Shines where the hearth-fire used to blaze,
The hearthstone still you can descry,
As smooth as in your loveliest days,
Rowena Darling.

Here whisks about the squirrel brown,
Here thrush or robin comes and sings ;
But, standing here, I can but think
Of other days and sweeter things,
Rowena Darling.

Here baked the apples in a row ;
Here cracked the chestnuts ripe and sweet ;
Here — ah, I seem to see them now ! —
You warmed your pretty buskined feet,
Rowena Darling.

And here, when burned the embers low,
And old folks long had been asleep,
Your heart stood still to hear a voice
That whispered — oh, how warm and deep ! —
Rowena — Darling !

Alas, how many years have fled
Since hearth and heart were warm and bright,
And all the room and all the world
Glowed with your love's supreme delight,
Rowena Darling !

This rose-bush growing by the door
Perhaps *you* planted, long ago ;
I pluck and kiss for your dear sake
Its fairest, be it so or no,
Rowena Darling.

UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

"Why callest thou me good? There is none good but God."



READ that, when Beethoven was grown old,
The mighty ravishment of that great power,
Which holds us willing captives to this hour,
Still like a torrent from his bosom rolled,
But on his outward sense it took no hold ;
Deaf were his ears to all that perfect dower
That gushed from him, as fragrance from a flower,
In tenderest joy a million hearts to fold.
I read of One from out whose heart there came
The music of a life at one with God ;
Which makes the ages echo with His fame,
And "Holy Land" the land which erst He trod :
And still, though tender, He with words of blame
Encountered one who dared to call Him good.

SUB-CONSCIOUSNESS.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."



ET when the mightiest of music's lords, —
Master-magician of that finer speech
Which tells of things that words can never
reach,

And room for soul as well as sense affords, —
When he could hear no more the thrilling chords,
He was not deaf as is the lonely beach
To its own music : there was still a breach
Through which he heard the inarticulate words.

And He that said, "Why callest thou me good?"
Nor heard the music that his life outpoured, —
He was not stranger to a peace which flowed
From those calm heights whereto his spirit soared.

The praise of men might bravely be withstood,
But not the Love he silently adored.

THE STORY OF MEDARDUS.



EDARDUS walked his studio-cell,
And sights of Heaven and shapes of Hell
Passed by him in a dream ;
For he a picture fain would paint
Of Mary or some blessed saint,
In altar-niche to gleam.

And there in vision Mary came,
Her face as bright as purest flame,
Her form of matchless grace ;
And dark beneath her feet he sees —
A sight to make the vitals freeze —
The Adversary's face.

"This shall my picture be," he said,
And seized his brush and straight essayed
To make the vision good ;
Nor cared for food, nor cared for rest,
But day and night, like one possessed,
Before his canvas stood.

The Virgin lent her kindly aid,
And soon the sacred dream was stayed,
And on the canvas glowed ;
The Virgin fair as fair could be,
But Satan not more hideously
Glowers in his own abode.

But as one day Medardus stood
In happy and exultant mood
Before his picture done,
He felt a chilling presence near,
And knew by something dark and drear
That he was not alone.

The Adversary spoke — 'twas he —
And promised gifts most lavishly,
If but Medardus would
Take something from the Virgin's grace
Or make his own accursed face
With less of hell imbued.

But no : Medardus seized his brush,
And gave the Virgin's face a flush
Of meaning more divine ;
While on the Adversary's face
He left a more terrific trace,
A more infernal sign.

Again the Tempter came to him,
But now with threatenings harsh and grim
Of evil things to come ;
But still Medardus would not yield,
And still *her* face with splendor filled
The dark and narrow room.

At last a day had come when all
The people made high festival ;
And, best of all the glee,
The picture by Medardus made
Would in the great square be displayed,
That all might come and see.

And there it was ; and while the crowd
Surged up, with acclamations loud,
To view the wondrous thing,
Medardus close beside it stood,
And praised the Virgin that he could
Make her such offering.

But sudden there was heard a cry,
And then down-swooping from on high
The Adversary sped :
Medardus seized, and high in air
Bore him ; then on the pavement there
He dashed him, bleeding — dead.

But see ! The Virgin seems to move
Her pictured arms ; her face with love
 Unspeakable is sweet :
She reaches from the picture forth,
And lifts Medardus from the earth
 And sets him on his feet.

Again he lives ! Again he sees
The crowd, now hushed upon their knees,
 And hears the Virgin say :
“ As thou wast ever true to me,
To-day I have been true to thee,
 And will be true alway.”

O Heavenly Father, grant that we
May from this tale of mystery
 This simple lesson gain :
That, if Thy visions we obey,
Whatever comes to curse or **slay**,
 It will but come in vain.



A TIMELY QUESTION.



If good men were only better,
Would the wicked be so bad?
Here's a story with an answer
To that question strange and sad.

Herod, famed among the wicked,
Called the Great with doubtful right,
When a boy of twenty summers
With banditti made a fight.

Hezekiah, their fierce captain,
Captured he and put to death;
Many a follower then compelled he
To resign his evil breath.

It was well done : who but thinks so?
Thought not so the Sanhedrin.
Herod was an Idumean ;
So his deed became a sin.

Let him kill his own banditti ;
Never dare to deal with theirs.
So they summoned him to meet them
And to settle his affairs.

Scarcely sooner said than done 'twas ;
Herod came ; they wished him back ;
For he came all clad in armor,
With his henchmen at his back.

Cowered the Sanhedrin before him ;
Dared not say a single word ;
Only Sameas withstood him
With a brave, " Thus saith the **Lord**.

Herod listened while the Rabbi
Execrated all his crimes ;
Then he vanished. Summers flitted ;
Fell the land on evil times ;

Antony and Cæsar ploughed it
With the iron share of war ;
Tore it with their cruel factions,
Left it many a dreadful scar ;

Till, at length, from Rome came Herod,
Sent by Cæsar to be king ;
At the gates his legions thundered,
Famine gnawed them from within.

Many months in vain he battered,
But, at last, surrender came ;
Then a deed that earned for Herod
Centuries of hateful fame.

Since the Sanhedrin had counselled
Firm resistance to his will,
“ Let them perish,” he commanded,
“ Let their blood the gutters fill.”

Only one he granted mercy, —
Sameas ; the very man
Who had years before withstood him.
Guess the reason if you can.

I have guessed it in the question
Which I venture, strange and sad :
If the good were only better,
Would the wicked be so bad ?



NOT YET.



N days long, long ago, when a divine unrest
Was surging like a sea in Europe's mighty
breast,

And the fierce Hermit's voice proclaimed the dear
Lord's will,
And drove the nations forth to strike and strive and kill,

If haply they might win from Saracenic horde
The tomb and precious dust of their most precious
Lord, —

As the Crusaders marched upon their weary way,
Never was seen, I trow, a motlier disarray ;

Baron and serf, and dames all beautiful and bright,
And women who had strayed far out into the night ;

And little children too, on mothers' aching breasts,
That heaved with many a sigh for their deserted nests ;

And as they toiled along, and came from place to place,
Now to some little town or hamlet void of grace,

The little children asked of those that carried them
In ever sadder tones, "Is this Jerusalem?"

And ever and again, with more and more regret,
Heard the disheartening words, "Not yet, my child,
not yet."

"Not yet, my child, not yet," I hear the Father say
To the Crusader true, of this our land and day;

"For many a weary league thy feet have yet to tread
Ere through the City's gates thou art in triumph led.

"Thou dost not know how high its gleaming spires
arise,
If with these village roofs thou canst content thine eyes

"Thou dost not guess how wide is every shining street,
If here thou think'st to find fit passage for thy feet.

"Thou hast not dreamed a dream of men supremely
strong,
Of women sweeter far than poet's sweetest song,

"If with these rustic boors thou canst be pleased to
dwell,
And with these damsels rude believe that all is well.

“Rest in no triumph won : the best is yet to be,
Not yet from half its woe is the great world set free.

“The victory of to-day, that seems so passing bright,
Is but a hamlet rude where thou shalt rest to-night.

“To-morrow up and on ; but not with hope to see,
Ere night shall come again, the City rise on thee.

“Far off, far off it lies, 'neath the horizon's rim :
Enough for thee to know, *I see Jerusalem !*

“Thou hast done well thy part, if thou hast done **thy**
best :
As sure as I am God, I answer for the rest.”

1867.



UNRECOGNIZED.



WHEN we have gone within the veil that hides
From mortal ken the lost of other days,
Amid the pure transparence of those rays
Wherein, unseen, the Light of Life abides,
Shall we indeed from out the luminous tides
Of spirits surging through those mystic ways
Full surely know — oh, joy beyond all praise ! —
Each waiting friend ? So heart to heart confides
Its secret pain. But one of clearest sight
So questioned, answered : While we still are here
Earth-pent, how often do we recognize,
For what they are, the spirits pure and bright
Close at our sides ? How not for heaven fear,
When mortal vapors wrap in such disguise !

THE HARDEST LOT.



O look upon the face of a dead friend
Is hard ; but 't is not more than we can bear
If, haply, we can see peace written there, —
Peace after pain, and welcome so the end,
Whate'er the past, whatever death may send.
Yea, and that face a gracious smile may wear,
If love till death was perfect, sweet, and fair.
But there is woe from which may God defend :
To look upon our friendship lying dead,
While we live on, and eat, and drink, and sleep —
Mere bodies from which all the soul has fled —
And that dead thing year after year to keep
Locked in cold silence on its dreamless bed : —
There must be hell while there is such a deep.

THE RISE OF MAN.



THOU for whose birth the whole creation yearned
Through countless ages of the morning world,
Who, first in fiery vapors dimly hurled,
Next to the senseless crystal slowly turned,
Then to the plant which grew to something more, —
Humblest of creatures that draw breath of life, —
Wherefrom through infinites of patient pain
Came conscious man to reason and adore :
Shall we be shamed because such things have been,
Or bate one jot of our ancestral pride?
Nay, in thyself art thou not deified
That from such depths thou couldst such summits win?
While the long way behind is prophecy
Of those perfections which are yet to be.


THE INEFFABLE NAME.



SEE an angel with dilated eyes
Filled with a wonder sweet beyond compare,
Around whose brows her wind-blown golden
hair
Makes aureole splendor, and her finger lies
Upon her lips. Dear angel of surprise,
The symbol thou of spirits high and fair,
Who to be silent still serenely dare,
Before all wonders of the earth and skies.
How name aright the Power that surges through
All times and worlds, nature and humankind?
O Light of light, such spirits are not blind
To thy perfections, old yet ever new !
When speech but mocks the overburdened heart,
They, choosing silence, choose the better part.

April 12, 1883.

STARLIGHT.

“OOK up,” she said ; and all the heavens blazed
With countless myriads of quiet stars,
Whereon a moment silently he gazed,
And drank that peace no trouble ever mars.
Then looking down into her face upturned,
Two other stars that did outshine the rest
Upward to him with such soft splendor yearned
That all her secret was at once confessed.
Then he with kisses did put out their light,
And said, “ O strange, but more dear love to me
Are thy pure eyes than all the stars of night
That shine in heaven everlastingly !
Night still is night, with every star aglow ;
But light were night didst thou not love me so.”

ANTI-DISCOURAGEMENT.



HE legend runs, that on his toilsome way
To reach the Buddha's crown of sacred joy,
Gautama lived a hundred various lives,
Deeming no task too mean for his employ,

So might he come at length to that high seat
Which is the topmost sovereignty of good,
And for a thousand ages bless the world
With the hell-deep salvation of the Buddh.

Of Buddhas there had been before his day
Twoscore and five ; and when the first of all
Was on this earth, it chanced he came anear
A hermit's cell, Guatama's, who did fall

Prone on his face, and of his body made
A living bridge, whereby the teacher crossed
A rushing stream ; and for this service he
Had gained, instead of that poor life he lost,

At once the Buddha's own ; but "No," he said,
 "I still will go the round of life and death
Some ages more, if so I may at length
 Redeem *all* creatures that draw painful breath."

And of the many forms in which abode
 The spirit which is now the Lord of all,
One was a small red squirrel, and full oft
 Lower than this, for love's sake, did he fall.

And lo ! there came a dreadful storm, which tore
 Gautama's squirrel-nest from off its tree,
And bore it, with its freight of helpless life,
 Far out upon a black and raging sea.

How save his young? Audacity of love !
 Quoth he, "At length this pretty brush of mine
Shall serve me well, for with it I will dry
 This deep sea up of all its weltering brine."

And so with valiant heart he went to work
 To save his brood ; and seven days he wrought,
Sprinkling the sea on the unconscious land,
 Nor would believe that it was all for naught.

Then Sekra, ruler of the heavens, saw
 What he was at, and laughed right merrily
To think a squirrel, with his tail, should deem
 That he could dry the unfathomable sea.

“Ho, there !” he cried, “a hundred thousand men
Could not accomplish what thou dost essay
If they should toil a hundred thousand years,
And all the hours were years of every day.”

“Thou speakest true,” the squirrel-saint replied ;
“So would it be if all were like to thee :
But mind, old imbecile, thine own affairs —
I shall go on till I have dried the sea.”

So with new ardor he frisked up and down
The wild sea’s edge, hearing his young ones cry,
Till Sekra ceased to laugh, and, looking down
With wondering pity from the inclement sky,

That such vast courage could have found a home
In such a feeble creature’s tiny breast,
Soothed all his winds to sleep, and o’er the deep
Spread suddenly a sweet and perfect rest,

Save where one kindly zephyr gently pressed
Landward the leafy squirrel-laden bough,
Till there was laughter in the heart which then
Was a red squirrel’s, but is Buddha’s now.

O mighty power of love ! O heart that dares
All things for its beloved ! To you alone
All things are possible ; the heavens bend,
And powers that scoffed will help you to your own !

JAN STEENER'S RIDE.



STORY is it, you want, little man?

Well, come and sit on your grandfather's knee,
And I'll do the best that ever I can —
It's one my grandfather told to me.

I'm somethin' more than eighty; well,
He was almost ninety, and hale and bright,
And I was sitting, as you are now,
Snug in his arms one winter night.

Said he: "When I was a smart young man —
Before the Dutch had the country lost —
There stood a church on the village green,
Right in the middle where two roads crossed.

"It stood as flush with the village street
As the top o' your head with the palm o' my hand, —
So; and running from east to west,
Open each end to the pleasant land,

“Spread out like a picture, the broad aisle ran,
With the dominie’s pulpit a bit one side
Of the upper end ; and there he stood,
Sounding his trumpet far and wide,

“One Sabbath morning, as pretty a day
As ever the Lord God chose to make ;
And what do you think was the Bible text
The dear old dominie chanced to take

“That morning, but one from the ‘Pocalypse
’Bout the great white horse and his rider, Death?
He was just beginning on ‘ninthly,’ and
The people were most of ’em holding their breath,

“When all at once, in at the open door,
And up the aisle with a thunderous sound,
Riding as white a horse as a man
Could find in all the country round,

“There came a horseman galloping fast —
A single flash — he had come and gone,
Leaving a hundred Dutch-folk there
With their hearts in their breasts like an icy stone.

“And the dominie he was scared the worst
Of ’em all ; he trembled and shivered and shook,
And gripped the pulpit as if he thought
The dreadful day of the Holy Book

“Had come for sure ; and at last he said :
‘What we have seen I dare not say :
But if it be a sign of the end,
There is need for us all to watch and pray.’

“So with prayer and blessing the frightened folk
Were all to their various homes dismissed ;
But one old burgher said, and swore,
As he shook like a hammer his grimy fist,

“He ’d bet a thousand thalers to one
That the man who rode and the clattering steed
Were just a youngster of flesh and blood
And a handsome horse of the Flemish breed.

“And, in truth, he was n’t much out, my lad !
I ought to know, for the horse was mine,
And I was the youngster that struck aghast
The dominie preaching his number nine.

“Don’t look so solemn ! You see, that day
I was bound to see the prettiest girl
That ever looked in a looking-glass
To conquer a wilful and wandering curl.

“And the shortest way to her side was through
The meeting-house aisle ; so through I went.
A minute’s difference, more or less ;
But life at the longest will soon be spent,

“ And the love of a girl who is sweet and true
Is a thing so precious beneath the sun
That one of its minutes is worth an age
Of hearts that never such bliss have won.”

This is the story my grandfather told
To yours ; it was fourscore years ago.
That is my grandmother's picture there ;
Do you wonder much that he loved her so ?

1875.



THE HARBOR-LIGHTS.



UST at the harbor's mouth she stood ;
Behind her was the beacon white,
Which sends its kindly warning forth
From evening shade till morning light.

Above her was the golden sun ;
More golden shone her tossing hair ;
The ocean's azure, at her feet,
With her blue eyes could not compare.

Full sheer the cliff whereon she stood,
And, though her eyes were downward cast,
I still could row my boat anear
And see their glory as I passed.

Patiently there she watched her line,
That sank among the golden weed.
"Who would not be a fish," thought I,
"By such sweet hands if doomed to bleed?"

Sweet hands, but browner than the rock
Whereon her pretty feet had place ;
Which, browner yet, laid hold of it
With naked purity and grace.

One day I dared to speak to her :
“ What have you caught to-day, my dear ? ”
“ Nothing but just a thought or two ;
More thoughts than fish come swimming here.”

“ And have you caught this thought, my dear,
That I love you and you love me ? ”
I dared not speak the question out ;
Such joy as that might never be.

So every day I pass her by,
But cannot bring my lips to say :
“ My heart is caught upon your hook,
And cannot tear itself away.”

Why should I speak ? She would not slip
From off the rocks into my boat,
And say, “ As thus for evermore
Let us together sit and float.”

She would not love, — ’tis not her time ;
But naught that she can do or say
Can rob me of my right divine
To love and worship her away.

O maiden at the harbor's mouth !
By day, with their distracting light,
Your eyes will wreck more venturous hearts
Than ever beacon saved by night.

1872.

A WEDDING-SONG.



SAID : " My heart, now let us sing a song
For a fair lady on her wedding-day ;
Some solemn hymn or pretty roundelay,
That shall be with her as she goes along
To meet her joy, and for her happy feet
Shall make a pleasant music, low and sweet."

Then said my heart : " It is right bold of thee
To think that any song that we could sing
Would for this lady be an offering
Meet for such gladness as hers needs must be,
What time she goes to don her bridal ring,
And her own heart makes sweetest carolling."

And so it is that with my lute unstrung,
Lady, I come to greet thy wedding-day ;
But once, methinks, I heard a poet say
The sweetest songs remain for aye unsung.
So mine, unsung, at thy dear feet I lay,
And with a " Peace be with thee ! " go my way.

October 8, 1879.

FATE.



ALL unconscious I beheld her ;
Knew not that my fate was nigh, —
Fate that wears such various aspect
To the victim's laughing eye.

Poets, painters, still to paint her
Dark and gloomy, do their best ;
Were I painter, I would paint her
All in cherry-color dressed.

She should be a little maiden,
Modest, shrinking, sweet, and fair,
At a party, playing forfeits,
Looking, " Kiss me if you dare ! "

Did I kiss you? If I did n't,
'T was the blunder of my life.
Was the last the hundred millionth?
Just one more then, little wife.

January 3, 1880.

COMING AND GOING.

COMING AND GOING.



THE OLDEST STORY.



UNDER the coverlet's snowy fold
The tiniest stir that ever was seen,
And the tiniest sound, as if fairy folk
Were cuddling under a leaf, I ween.

That is the baby : he came to town
Only a day or two ago ;
But he looks as wise as if he knew
All that a baby can ever know.

There he lies in a little heap,
As soft as velvet, as warm as toast,
As rosy-red as the harvest moon
Which I saw so big on the hazy coast.

Hear him gurgle and sputter and sigh,
As if his dear little heart would break,
And scold away as if all the world
Were only meant for his littleness' sake.

Blink, little eyes, at the strange new light ;
Hark, little ears, at the strange new sound :
Wonderful things shall you see and hear
As the days and the months and the years go round.

Hardly you seem a Life at all ;
Only a Something with hands and feet,
Only a Feeling that things are warm,
Only a Longing for something to eat.

Have you a thought in your downy head?
Can you say to yourself so much as " I " ?
Have you found out yet that you are yourself?
Or has God what you will be by and by ?

It 's only a little that we can guess,
But it 's quite as much as we care to know ;
The rest will come with the fleeting years,
Little by little, — and better so.

Enough for the day is the good thereof :
The speck of a thing that is lying there,
And the presence that fills the silent house
With the tender hush of a voiceless prayer.

October 29, 1877.

IN AN UNKNOWN TONGUE.



KNOW full well what saith Saint Paul ;
For unknown tongues he did not care ;
It was as much as he could do
To speak them good and fair.

Give him the known and understood ;
Five words of this he counted more
Than thousands ten of all the rest
That men could babble o'er.

But then he did n't, as he might,
Like Peter, take a wife about,
To tend his thorn, and soothe his heart,
With combat wearied out.

And so he had no tiny Paul,
No nonsense-prating, wee Pauline,
To make him half forget the strife
His Jew and Greek between.

I cannot glory, as could he,
In perils both by sea and land ;
Of visions I have had a few, —
Some hard to understand.

But I can glory in a Boy,
As dear as ever poet sung ;
And all his speech, from morn till eve,
Is in an unknown tongue.

Strange, bubbling, rippling, gurgling sounds
His pouting lips still overflow ;
But what the meaning of them is,
The wisest do not know.

Friends have I, learned in the Greek,
In Latin, Hebrew, Spanish, Dutch,
In French and German ; and a few
Of Sanscrit know — not much.

They come and hear the Baby's speech,
As blithe as any song of bird ;
They wonder much, but go away,
Nor understand a word.

It minds me now of mountain rills,
And now of zigzag droning bees,
And now of sounds the summer makes
Among the leafy trees.

And yet, if I should say the truth,
Five words of his to me are more
Than of the words I understand
Five hundred times a score.

For whatsoever they may mean
To him, or to my learned friends,
One meaning, of all meanings best,
He still to me commends :

That life is sweet for him and me,
Though half its meaning be not guessed ;
That God is good, and I a child
Upon his loving breast.

1878.



TO JACOB ABBOTT.



DEAR charmer of a thousand happy hours,
My earliest guide into those blessed ways
Wherein I have delighted all my days,
Sweeter to me than laggard August showers
To thirsty fields, it was, to hear thee tell
Of happy Rollo, and of Jonas wise,
And Lucy with her meek inquiring eyes,
And all that happed to dearest Mary Bell.
Now thou art gone, so long the children's friend !
But, as I muse, I seem at heaven's door
To hear a sound which there I heard before,
When Danish Hans that way did softly wend, —
A sound of children making merriest din
Of welcome as the old man enters in.

BROOKLYN, 1881.

A TRUE STORY.

“Greater love hath no man than this”



FROM a home that had two darlings
One was called and went away, —
Baby Ralph ; and little Willie
Missed him sorely at his play.

As one day he talked about him,
Wondering much where he had gone,
Wishing much he would not tarry,
Brother Willie was so lone, —

Said the mother, so beguiling
Something of her secret pain,
“What would Willie give if only
Baby Ralph could come again?”

Drooped the little head in silence,
Thinking hard, 'twas plain to see ;
Then he spoke out strong and tender,
“*Mamma I would give God me.*”

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY?



F they could find a voice, these little ones,
That freeze by night and hunger all the day,
If they could find a voice and speak to you,
What think you, men and women, would
they say?

They would say, If God had told them, up in heaven,
Of the welcome that awaited them on earth,
And had let them choose to stay with Him for ever,
Or to taste the awful mystery of birth ;

Though it would have been most bitter not to listen
To the prayers of women waiting for their birth,
They would have stayed for ever up in heaven,
And would never have descended to the earth.

But they came, (oh, little feet !) not knowing whither, —
Did not dream but that the earth would serve them
well ;
Did not dream that they were wandering out of heaven
To encounter all the miseries of hell.

“But now that we are with you, men and women,”
They would say, if they could only find the word,

“We pray you do not turn to bitter crying
What should be the sweetest music ever heard.

“For the fathers and the mothers that God gave us
Did for us the very best that they could do,
But they perished with their over-work and sorrow,
And we turn from their dead faces unto you.

“Will you help us to be innocent and happy?
Will you help us to be womanly and pure?
Will you save us from the terrible temptations
That for ever lie in waiting for the poor?

“Will you snatch us from the dreadful tooth of famine,
From the sharper tooth of ignorance and sin?
Will you lead us from this fearful outer darkness
To the light which evermore doth shine within?

“If you will, O men and women, we will bless you;
And the children that God lets you call your own
Shall reward you, with their sweetest baby murmurs,
For not leaving us to perish all alone.”

If they could find a voice, these little ones,
That freeze by night and hunger all the day, —
If they could find a voice and speak to you,
Men and women, it is this that they would say.

THE FATHER'S JOY.



S closely to my heart this morn
I held the little child
That lately came to me from God,
So sweet and undefiled, —

Bending above her little face
As though it were a book,
In which to know that God is good
I needed but to look, —

Up to my eyes she turned her own
In such a wondrous way,
That I shall be a happier man
Henceforward from this day.

For not more plainly, if in words
She could her meaning tell,
Could she declare her message sweet,
“Father, I know you well!”

O recognition more divine
Than lovers' looks of love,
When first they know the will of God
And all His goodness prove !

O recognition more divine
Than words of mine can say !
What have I done, O God, that Thou
Shouldst bless me so alway ?

Into the face of death, to-day,
I could have looked and smiled,
And said, "Come take me, for I've had
A message from my child."

January, 1868.

THE MOTHER'S JOY.



LITTLE, I ween, did Mary guess,
As on her arm her baby lay,
What tides of joy would swell and beat,
Through ages long, on Christmas day.

And what if she had known it all, —
The awful splendor of his fame?
The inmost heart of all her joy
Would still, methinks, have been the same :

The joy that every mother knows
Who feels her babe against her breast :
The voyage long is overpast,
And now is calm and peace and rest.

“Art thou the Christ?” The wonder came
As easy as her infant’s breath :
But answer none. Enough for her,
That love had triumphed over death.

Christmas, 1883.



“*WATER AND THE SPIRIT.*”

Written for the baptism of a little child.



WHEN summer clouds distil
The sweetness of the rain,
What various work it finds to do
Ere it goes back again !

It feeds the mountain rills
As they go hurrying down ;
It cools the pavements, hot as flame,
In the deserted town.

It tinkles day and night
In fountains silver clear,
Tempting the little birds to come
And make their toilet near.

About the roots of flowers
And the great roots of trees,
It lingereth as tenderly
As saint upon his knees.

And many a thirsty soul
Its limpid sweetness quaffs,
And when the farmer smells the rain
How merrily he laughs !

O rain that comes from Heaven !
The life that comes from God,
Ere it returns, more paths than thine
Shall wonderingly have trod.

On mountain and on plain
This has a work to do,
A joy to get, a joy to give,
That cannot be for you.

This shall have rills to feed,
And cool the heated ways ;
This too shall bubble, fountainwise,
For many pleasant days.

And this where all is dark,
As it were underground,
Shall nurse the hidden roots of power
With never voice or sound.

And this for those who thirst,
All tired and sore of feet,
Must be the cup of water cold
For His disciple meet.

O child, so fresh from heaven,
What omens sweet and grand
Run up to kiss thy tiny feet
Like waves upon the sand !

Wave-omens, kiss and kiss ;
Our hearts accept you all,
And dare believe more blessings wait
Than we have words to call.

BROOKLYN, 1873.

CATCHING SUNSHINE.



Y next door neighbor's little girl,
A cunning two-year-old,
Wondered one day why drooped her flowers,
And pleaded to be told.

Then said her mother, "Here in-doors
The sunshine doesn't come
To warm and bless and gladden them,
And make them feel at home."

Next morning when she went to seek
Her darling at her play,
She found her standing in the sun
In just the queerest way ;

For there she held aloft a cup
Above her pretty head.
"What are you doing, Lolo dear?"
Mamma, astonished, said.

And she, her cup still held aloft, —
Bless her, ye Heavenly Powers! —
“ I’m catching sunshine, mother dear,
To give my ’ittle f’owers.”

Type of all children there was she,
Who in life’s garden stand,
Still holding tenderly aloft
Their life-cup in their hand.

We, buried in our sordid cares,
Are plants that droop and die ;
They catch God’s sunshine as it flows
For ever from on high.

Upon our weary, aching hearts
They let its blessing fall ;
Their office this in every land,
In cottage, hut, and hall.

And so the world is kept alive,
And freshened every minute,
By the dear grace that overflows
The children who are in it.

GIFTS IN SLEEP.



OUR sweet boy-baby had a gift,
A home-made rabbit, soft and white
By day, by night, awake, asleep,
It evermore was his delight.

Beauty and use could not agree,
It lost its whiteness more and more ;
It lost its tail, it lost its ears :
He loved it better than before.

And still the grimy little heap
He tucked beneath his dainty chin ;
And still to bed without his pet
Was sure to brew a dreadful din.

Nightly we found his rosy cheek
Against his battered darling pressed.
A vote was passed : when Christmas came,
He should of it be dispossessed,

And in its place, at dead of night,
Another should be slyly placed,
With coat of down as snowy white
As a wee rabbit ever graced.

The deed was done. Not without tears
We took the dear old pet away,
And wrapped it up and marked it plain,
To keep against some distant day,

When, haply, to some boy of his
He might the frowzy relic show,
For proof that he was true in love
Some five-and-twenty years ago.

Where lay the old we laid the new,
And waited for the Christmas morn,
As wait a hundred million hearts
For the dear time when Christ was born.

It came at length, and baby woke,
To clutch his precious *liebling* fast ;—
It was the same, yet not the same !
Its squalor with the night had passed !

He looked at first with dubious face,
But soon resolved that all was right ;
So cuddled it the livelong day,
And pressed it to his cheek at night.

And then I thought, 'T is writ "He gives
To His beloved while they sleep ;"
And deeper meanings found me out,
While lay my boy in slumbers deep.

THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS.



HIS little pageant, well I know,
Inspired by love did sweetly grow ;
And well I know the pageant vast,
All beautiful from first to last,
Of worlds on worlds in phalanx deep,
From suns that blaze to vines that creep,
From planets singing on their way
To flowers that dread the eye of day,
From rivers that rejoicing go
To brooks that murmur sweet and low,
From genius, with its years of fame,
To simple lives devoid of blame, —
Oh, well I know this pageant fair
Is proof of love beyond compare !

O Love, that dost with goodness crown
The years through all the ages down !

'Tis in Thy strength the mountains stand,
The seasons roll at Thy command,
And rooted are all things that bless
Deep in Thy everlastingness.
The pith of all our Christmas cheer
Is that Thy life is ever near ;
Within Thy circling arms we lie,
Lapped in Thy great infinity.

All praise and honor to His name,
Who, spite of taunt and cruel shame,
Was brave to teach, as wise to know,
That these great things are surely so.
For this our loving court we pay
At His dear feet on Christmas day ;
For this through all the coming years,
In all our joys and hopes and fears,
We still will pay Him reverence due,
And in His witness, brave and true,
Hear echoes clear, through all the din,
Of that deep voice which speaks within.

GRACE BEFORE MEAT.



GAIN the Christmas board is spread,
Again we gather round ;
And thanks too deep for words go up
To God without a sound.

Thanks for the common blessings first,
The commonest of all,
The daily bread, the manna sweet,
That never fails to fall, —

The daily bread, the daily joy,
The greeting morn and eve,
The kiss of love, the kiss of peace
Which daily we receive.

And if with all the joy He sends
Some grief is also there,
We praise Him still that He doth give
The patience that can bear, —

Can bear, and through the bearing find,
Within the hardest lot,
Some hidden grace which none may know
Save those who have it got.

But shall this merry time go past,
And thanks remain unsped
For Him who said so long ago,
“I am the living Bread ;”

For Him, star-lit by Mary's smile,
Whom simple shepherds found,
And wise men from the brooding East,
Where oxen stood around ?

No wonder that they worshipped Him !
He was a baby sweet ;
They had been foolish not to kneel
And kiss His rosy feet.

But little recked they as He lay
In such a lowly place,
That He should be the Man of men,
The captain of His race.

We differ when we speak of Him,
Our words are not the same,
But in our heart there burns for aye
One undivided flame.

Our words must differ, but our hearts
 Still yield Him reverence due ;
 We love in spite of all our creeds ;
 Our love at least is true.

And if, above the starry skies,
 He knows of what is here,
 He knows there is a place for Him
 At all our Christmas cheer.

1873.

ANNUS MIRABILIS.

I.



THAT year of all Thy years, O Father mine,
 Is not more wonderful than words can say ?
 The starry night, the splendor of the day —
 Are not, all years, these benefactions thine ?
 Doth not each spring reveal a life divine,
 Each summer nourish with unstinted ray,
 Each autumn make the leafy woodlands gay,
 And load with clusters every clinging vine ?
 Doth not each winter make the silent stars
 Into more awful spaces seem withdrawn,

And deck with softer radiance the cars
That speed the sunset and bring back the dawn,
And over hill and valley slow unfold
A vesture rarer than were cloth of gold?

II.

And yet, O God! the half has not been told.
I have not named the rapture of delight
When new-born spirits break upon our sight;
When love, at first so timid, groweth bold,
And all the highest heavens seem unrolled,
That we may read in characters of light
Of days to which succeeds no dark'ning night;
But the night cometh drearily and cold.
Yet is death wonderful as well as life,
And wonderful the hope of life in store,
And wonderful all labor and all strife
For better things than e'er have been before.
Yea, God, the wonder of thy humblest years
Fills all my soul with laughter and with tears.

DECEMBER 31, 1874.

SADNESS AND GLADNESS.



HERE was a glory in my house,
And it is fled ;
There was a baby at my heart,
And it is dead.

And when I sit and think of him,
I am so sad,
That half it seems that never more
Can I be glad.

If you had known this baby mine,
He was so sweet
You would have gone a journey just
To kiss his feet.

He could not walk a single step,
Nor speak a word ;
But then he was as blithe and gay
As any bird

That ever sat on orchard-bough,
And trilled its song,
Until the listener fancied it
As sweet and strong

As if from lips of angels he
Had heard it flow ;
Such angels as thy hand could paint,
Angelico !

You cannot think how many things
He learned to know
Before the swift, swift angel came,
And bade him go ;

So that my neighbors said of him,
He was so wise
That he was never meant for earth,
But for the skies.

But I would not believe a word
Of what they said ;
Nor will I, even now, although
My boy is dead.

For God would be most wicked, if,
When all the earth
Is in the travail of a new
And heavenly birth,

As often as a little Christ is found
With human breath,
He, like another Herod, should resolve
Upon its death.

But should you ask me how it is
That yours can stay,
Though mine must spread his little wings
And fly away,

I could but say, that God, who made
This heart of mine,
Must have intended that its love
Should be the sign

Of His own love ; and that if He
Can think it right
To turn my joy to sorrow, and
My day to night,

I cannot doubt that He will turn,
In other ways,
My winter darkness to the light
Of summer days.

I know that God gives nothing to
Us for a day ;
That what He gives He never cares
To take away.

And when He comes and seems to make
Our glory less,
It is that, bye-and-bye, we may
The more confess

That He has made it brighter than
It was before, —
A glory shining on and on
For evermore.

And when I sit and think of this,
I am so glad,
That half it seems that never more
Can I be sad.

BROOKLYN, 1865.



LITTLE HANNAH.



WHEN the earliest life of spring
First began to stir the sod,
And a blossom here and there
Softly sang the praise of God,

On a day of days there sprang,
Perfect from the dim unknown,
Such a flower as never yet
Had in field or meadow grown.

Yet indeed akin it was
To the blossoms, sweet and rare,
That in March their beauty bring
To the eager, waiting air.

Little sister did she seem
Of the wind-flowers full of grace ;
Of the " Quaker-ladies " one,
Or the arbutus' gentle race.

Cousin of the violets too,
With their color in her eyes,
Greeting all the wonder new
With a look of sweet surprise.

All the flowers that with her came,
Had their hour and went away ;
But the little blue-eyed maid
Tarried many a pleasant day.

Thrice the spring to summer grew,
Thrice the merry autumn browned,
Thrice the winter whiteness fell
Tenderly adown, around.

But before again the spring
'Gan to softly shoot and stir,
Happy ways that she had known,
Knew, alas, no more of her !

Gone the dainty little maid !
Gone the blossom heavenly fair !
Gone, — but leaving all around
Wondrous sweetness in the air.


Flowers are still her next of kin,
Flowers that are so dainty sweet ;
Pansies are for thoughts of her,
Roses for her gladness meet.

And in all her little world,
If you can, the smallest spot
Find, that does not sweetly show
Blossoms of forget-me-not.

January 28, 1883.



A DOUBLE MEANING.

“AMMA, I see you over there,”
He said, and then he sank to rest,
Happy to feel that she was near
To guard and tend his little nest.

But when the morning broke, it brought
Another night of deeper gloom ;
For the blue heaven of Jamie's eyes
No longer lighted all the room.

No answering word or look or smile
Our hungry hearts might hope to win ,
And the faint breathing fainter grew,
Then stopped, and did no more begin.

“Mamma, I see you over there :”
No simpler words could he have said,
But now that he is gone they seem
A message from the living dead.

“I see you over there,” it says,
“Father and Mother, in your pain ;
I see the way that I have come,
But may not traverse it again.

“But still my thought can go to you,
As yours can come and stay with me ;
And each can know the other near,
And greatly joy with it to be.

“And so if, as the days go past,
Our thoughts can thus together bide,
Whate’er is missed, are *we* not still
Living together side by side ?”

This is the message. Well we know
’Tis but the echo of our prayer ;
And yet we trust that ’tis a sign
Of what is true of Here and There.



UNDER THE SNOW.



DEEP under snow the mountain world
 For many a week had lain ;
 Deep in my heart for many a year
 Had hid its viewless pain.

There came a day of warmer sun
 From out the winter sky,
 And premonitions of the spring
 Went wandering softly by.

And lo, a bit of earth revealed !
 And lo, at little feet
 Pressing the cold and cheerless sod,
 One pansy, pure and sweet !

“ Pansies for thoughts ! ” and oh, for me
 This pansy of the snow
 Has thoughts that deeper than the depths
 Of mountain bases go, —

Thoughts of my little baby flower
Beneath the mounded sod ;
Thoughts of the baby life that lives
Forevermore with God.

Oh, gently falls the glistening snow
Where he so long has lain !
Oh, gently fall the years of God
Upon my bitter pain !

Fall deeper yet, O years of God !
There comes another day
When winds from off the hills beyond
Shall melt your snows away ;

And many a dear, long-hidden thing
Shall then be brought to light ;
And then who knows but my lost Face
Shall bloom again, as bright

As this wee blossom, hid so long,
But waiting tenderly
Till it could bring to me a thought
Of Immortality !

February 12, 1881.

COMFORT IN SORROW.

COMFORT IN SORROW.



A SONG OF TRUST.



LOVE Divine, of all that is
The sweetest still and best,
Fain would I come and rest to-night
Upon thy sheltering breast.

As tired of sin as any child
Was ever tired of play,
When evening's hush has folded in
The noises of the day ;

When just for very weariness
The little one will creep
Into the arms that have no joy
Like holding him in sleep ;

And looking upward to Thy face,
So gentle, sweet, and strong
In all its looks for those who love,
So pitiful of wrong,

I pray Thee turn me not away,
For, sinful though I be,
Thou knowest every thing I need
And all my need of Thee.

And yet the spirit in my heart
Says, Wherefore should I pray
That Thou shouldst seek me with Thy love,
Since Thou dost seek alway?

And dost not even wait until
I urge my steps to Thee ;
But in the darkness of my life
Art coming still to me.

I pray not, then, because I would ;
I pray because I must ;
There is no meaning in my prayer
But thankfulness and trust.

I would not have Thee otherwise
Than what Thou ever art ;
Be still Thyself, and then I know
We cannot live apart.

But still Thy love will beckon me
And still Thy strength will come,
In many ways to bear me up
And bring me to my home.

And Thou wilt hear the thought I mean,
And not the words I say ;
Wilt hear the thanks among the words
That only seem to pray ;

As if Thou wert not always good,
As if Thy loving care
Could even miss me in the midst
Of this Thy temple fair.

If ever I have doubted Thee,
How can I any more,
So quick to-night my tossing bark
Has reached the happy shore ;

And, even while it sighed, my heart
Has sung itself to rest,
O Love Divine, forever near,
Upon Thy sheltering breast !

1865.



THE OTHER SIDE.



CLIMBING the mountain's shaggy crest,
I wondered much what sight would greet
My eager gaze whene'er my feet
Upon the topmost height should rest.

The other side was all unknown ;
But, as I slowly toiled along,
Sweeter to me than any song
My dream of visions to be shown.

Meanwhile the mountain shrubs distilled
Their sweetness all along my way,
And the delicious summer day
My heart with rapture overfilled.

At length the topmost height was gained ;
The other side was full in view ;
My dreams — not one of them was true,
But better far had I attained.

For far and wide on either hand
There stretched a valley broad and fair,
With greenness flashing everywhere, —
A pleasant, smiling, home-like land.

Who knows, I thought, but so 'twill prove
Upon that mountain-top of death,
Where we shall draw diviner breath,
And see the long-lost friends we love.

It may not be as we have dreamed,
Not half so awful, strange, and grand ;
A quiet, peaceful, home-like land,
Better than e'er in vision gleamed.

Meanwhile along our upward way
What beauties lurk, what visions glow !
Whatever shall be, this we know
Is better than our lips can say.

BETHEL, ME., 1874.



NOS MORITURI TE SALUTAMUS.



OT, Heavenly Father, that we ask or hope
 An idle heaven beyond the sea of death,
 Do we, about to die, salute Thee thus
 With our fast-failing breath.

For we have found the dearest joy of earth
 In work for Thee and for our fellow-men ;
 Dying, we would not lay the burden down ;
 As now, so be it then.

Not that we claim reward for duty done,
 Though ne'er so bravely, in this mortal strife,
 Do we demand of Thee, O God, our God,
 A never-ending life.

For it has been reward enough for us
 To do the duty for its own sweet sake.
 We have our dues, but not the less our cry
 For life to come we make.

Over a few things we have faithful been :
Now over many do Thou give us rule ;
For work, more work ; for lessons learned, to be
For ever in Thy school.

Not that we want a better world than this ,
Rather that this is so divinely good ;
And what is best in it doth ever taste
As 'twere immortal food.

Not that we hope to reach some happy shore,
Where storms shall never dim the summer sky,
Where struggle, sorrow, pain, shall be no more,
Seems it less hard to die.

We know too well the good of sorrow here ;
What after freshness lurks in every storm ;
What strength and beauty, pain and struggle, bring
In their forbidding form.

Thus, O our Father, we about to die
Salute Thee, not in selfishness or fear ;
And dare believe that there is more beyond
Than we have dreamed of here.

LIFE AFTER DEATH.



OFT was the air of spring, and at his feet
The turf, full swift, was turning green and
sweet,

As from the city Rabbi Nathan passed,
Musing on Him who is the first and last.

'The tuneful birds he heard in woodlands dim,
Wooing each other with that vernal hymn,
Which, flowing first from the great heart above,
Keeps fresh the world with its perpetual love.

Anon he came to where with eager toil
An aged man, fretting the fragrant soil
With his sharp spade, did make a space to set
A cobar tree, — the greatest wonder yet !

For seventy years the cobar tree must grow,
Full seventy years leaves bear and shadows throw,
Ere to fair fruit its fair, sweet blossoms turn,
For all the Day-god's ever-flowing urn.

“What madness this!” doth Rabbi Nathan cry;
“Thou workest here as one not born to die;
As if thyself didst hope that of this tree
Fruit yet should come to be a joy to thee.”

Then turned the aged man, and gently said:
“This tree shall grow long after I am dead;
But though its fruit my hands may never gain,
My planting, Rabbi, will not be in vain.

“Have I not eaten of the cobar tree?
My father’s father planted it for me.
So plant I this, that in the coming days
My children’s children may my labor praise.”

“Thou fool!” the Rabbi said, “to work for those
Who may or not be, Heaven only knows.
All earthly things full soon must pass away,
’Tis only work for Heaven that will pay.”

He wandered on, and, as the sun now low,
Rushed to its setting, and a sudden glow
Filled all the west, he laid him down to sleep,
Nor guessed how long the charm its power would keep.

For many a moon did wax and wane again,
And many a year did bring its joy and pain,
Ere he awoke, and not far off beheld
What seemed the tree that he had known of old.

But now it was full grown, and at its root
A man, full grown, was eating of its fruit,
Who said, when asked how came it thus to be,
“My father’s father planted it for me.”

Then Rabbi Nathan knew that seventy years,
With all their precious freight of smiles and tears,
Had fled since he had lain him down to sleep,
And felt the slumber o’er his eyelids creep.

He wandered back into the city street,
But saw no friend with voice of love to greet ;
Yet in the schools where he of old did teach,
He heard the sages quote his silver speech.

And then he saw that not in heaven alone,
But here on earth, we live when we are gone ;
Too late he learned the lesson of to-day :
The world goes on when we are gone away.

The world goes on ; and happiest is he
Who in such wise wins immortality,
That, should he sleep for ever in the grave,
His work goes on and helps the world to save.

MARCH, 1871.

KING EDWIN'S FEAST.



HERE was feasting in the hall
And the beards wagged all.
Oh ! the board was heaped with food,
And the ale was like a flood,
And 'twas bitter winter weather
When King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes
Were a-feasting thus together.

As the board was heaped with food,
So the hearth was piled with wood ;
Ay, with oaken logs a score ;
And the flames did leap and roar,
And they cast a ruddy glow
On King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes
As they feasted in a row.

All at once they were aware
Of a flutter in the air,
As a little sparrow came
In between them and the flame,

Then a moment flew around,
While King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes
Wondered whither he was bound.

Then he vanished through the door,
And they never saw him more ;
But up spoke a noble Thane,
As a silence seemed to reign,
And a wonder seemed to fall
On King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes
As they feasted in the hall :

“What is all this life of ours,
With its graces and its powers ?
It is like the bird that came
In between us and the flame,
Stayed a moment in the room
With King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes,
Then was off into the gloom.

“So we come out of the night,
Stay a moment in the light
Of a warm and pleasant room,
Then go forth into the gloom.
Hither somehow tempest-tost,
O King Edwin ! and you, eldormen and thanes,
Then again in darkness lost.”

Then another silence fell
And the first who broke the spell
Was Paulinus, the Christian, and he said,
Bowing low a reverent head
That was white with many years,
To King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes,
And his words were dim with tears :

“Oh ! not merely tempest-tost,
Not again in darkness lost,
Is the little bird that came
In between us and the flame ;
For the bird will find his nest.
So, King Edwin, and you, eldormen and thanes,
Be not your hearts distressed.

“Not from darkness comes the soul,
Nor shall darkness be its goal.
For that, too, there is a nest,
Whither flying it shall rest
Evermore. It must be so.”
Said King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes,
“ *Would to God that we might know !*”

BUDDHA'S LESSON.



ISAGOTAMI saw her first child's face ;
She saw him grow in knowledge and in grace ;
But it was only for a little space.

Kisagotami saw him lying dead ;
Against her heart she pressed his curly head,
And forth into the neighbors' houses sped.

"Something to heal my darling's hurt !" she cried.
"Girl, thou art mad," was all that each replied.
But one : "Thy cure with Buddha doth abide."

Still holding the dead child against her heart,
She found the prophet, and made known her smart :
"Buddha, canst cure him with thy wondrous art ?"

"A grain of mustard-seed," the sage replied,
"Found where none old or young has ever died,
Will cure the pain you carry in your side."

Kisagotami wandered forth again,
And in the homes of many hundred men
She sought the seed where death had never been

'Twas all in vain. Then in a lonely wood
Her child with leaves she buried as she could,
And once again in Buddha's presence stood.

"Daughter," he said, "hast found the magic seed?"
And she: "I find that every heart doth bleed;
That every house of death hath taken heed."

Then Buddha said: "This knowledge is thy cure.
Thy sorrow, soon or late, for all is sure;
Therefore, my child, be patient and endure."

FEBRUARY, 1874.

DEATH AND SPRING.

C. P. G.



Y noble friend is dead,
And in his narrow bed
The earth doth gently rest
Upon his gentle breast.

And still the sun doth pour
Its brightness as before;
And still in every place
The spring comes on apace;

And still the sweet flowers blow,
The flowers he cared for so ;
And still the wee birds sing,
At rest or on the wing.

“ O cruel sun,” I said,
“ To shine when he is dead ;
O cruel spring, to come
When his dear lips are dumb ;
O cruel flowers, to bloom
When he is in the tomb ;
O cruel birds, to sing,
And he not listening ! ”

Then from an inner sky
I heard a soft reply :
“ Doth any day go by
And not some loved one die,
Though all unknown to thee,
As dear as thine could be ?
Not thou alone dost cry
For nature’s sympathy.
To every mourning heart
The sunshine brings a smart,
The spring seems all too gay,
The flowers are wished away,
The birds’ songs in the trees
Are subtle mockeries.

“ If grief could have its will,
All days were dark and chill.
The spring would never come ;
The flowers would never bloom ;
The birds would never sing,
At rest or on the wing.

“ Rest, troubled spirit, rest :
God knoweth what is best.

“ The sunshine thou dost chide
Hath healing in its tide ;
The spring that comes apace
Shall touch thee with its grace ;
The flowers their sweet perfume
Shall shed upon his tomb ;
The birds in woodlands dim
Shall make lament for him ;
And thou some day shalt see
That it was best for thee
That all thy sorrow was so strangely blent
With nature’s harmony of full content.”

MAY, 1874.

SEALED ORDERS.

“Thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”



OUR life is like a ship that sails some day
To distant waters, leagues on leagues away ;
Not knowing what command to do and dare
Awaits her when her eager keel is there.

Birth, love, and death are ports we leave behind,
Borne on by rolling wave and rushing wind ;
Bearing a message with unbroken seal,
Whose meaning fain we would at once reveal.

And there are friends who stand upon the shore
And watch our sail till it is seen no more ;
And cry, “Oh ! would that we might know the way
The brave ship goes for many a weary day !”

It may not be. But ever and anon
Some order, sealed at first, we ope and con ;
So learn what next, so east or westward fly,
And ne'er again that port of Birth espy.

How many another craft goes dancing by !
What pennants float from morn and evening sky !
By day how white our wake behind us streams !
By night what golden, phosphorescent gleams !

There comes a day when Love, that lies asleep,
The fairest island in the mighty deep,
Wakes on our sight ; its fragrant shores we reach,
And grates our keel upon its shining beach.

There do we stay awhile ; but soon again
We trim our sails to seek the open main ;
And now, whatever winds and waves betide,
Two friendly ships are sailing side by side.

Where lies their course in vain they seek to know.
“ Go forth,” the Spirit says, and forth they go ;
Enough that, wheresoever they may fare,
Alike the sunshine and the storm they share.

Islands that none e’er visited before
Invite to land with easy-shelving shore ;
Circes and Sirens fling their challenge out,
Charybdis deafens Scylla’s deafening shout ;

But still these ships keep joyful company,
And many a new, strange land they haste to see.
In port of Love ’twas pleasant to abide,
But, oh ! Love’s sea is very deep and wide.

Ay, deep and wide, and yet there comes a day
When these fond ships must sail a parted way ;
The port of Death doth one of them beguile,
The other lingers for a little while.

Lingers as near as she may dare to go,
And plies the cold, gray offing to and fro ;
Waiting, impatient, for the high command
To sail into the shadow of the land.

Is this the end ? I know it cannot be.
Our ships shall sail upon another sea ;
New islands yet shall break upon our sight,
New continents of love and truth and might.

But still not knowing, still with orders sealed,
Our track shall lie across the heavenly field ;
Yet there, as here, though dim the distant way,
Our strength shall be according to our day.

The sea is His. He made it, and His grace
Lurks in its wildest wave, its deepest place.
Our truest knowledge is that He is wise ;
What is our foresight to His sweet surprise ?

NO MORE SEA.

I.



S, when the friends we dearly love
Go sailing over sea,
For all the joy to which they go,
Our hearts will saddened be ;

So when upon that sea which rolls
All earth and heaven between,
Those whom we love, upon the deck
Of death's great ship are seen ;

For all the joy to which they go,
Though heaven be e'er so sweet,
And e'er so good and wonderful
The folk they go to meet ;

As with intensest gaze we watch,
And see them fade from sight,
God help us, but our human hearts
Are any thing but light !

II.

As, when the friends we dearly love
Have gone beyond the sea,
The far-off lands in which they bide
More real get to be ;

So when our loved ones once have crossed
Death's lone and silent sea,
And in a country new and strange
Found immortality,

The heavenly land in which they bide,
Which erst did ever seem
An unsubstantial pageant vast, —
A dreamer's idle dream, —

Becomes as solid to my soul
As is the earth I tread,
What time I walk with reverent feet
The city of the dead.

Not Europe seems so real to me,
The Alps not so eterne,
As that dear land for which at times
My heart doth inly burn.

And not so sure am I that whom
The Atlantic's waves divide
Will meet again some happy day,
And linger side by side,

As that the day shall surely come
When I with all I love
Shall meet again, and clasp and kiss,
In that dear land above.

MAY, 1870.

THREE HAPPY SOULS.



RARE sweet day of June! What is it gives
To thy dear rapture a diviner power?
It is that I have seen three happy souls,
All in the fleeting of a single hour.

One was a maiden, with forereaching sense
Feeling amid the lustre of her hair
The fragrant blossoms of that wifely crown
Which, when June days are longest, she will wear.

And all her thoughts were going to and fro,
And building from that blessed day and hour
A nest wherein her heart already sang
Sweet songs of home and love's eternal power.

One was a mother, and her babe, new-born
Lay on her arm and murmured 'gainst her heart
Something that had no need of words to tell
The mystic meaning it would fain impart.

She understood. God had revealed Himself
Once more, as in the manger-nest of old ;
She, too, had seen the Father, full of grace, —
Did even then Him to her bosom hold.

And these were happy. But the happiest
Was one who waited for a voice to say,
“Friend, come up higher.” Fearing only this :
That he might be too willing to obey.

For pain had worked on him its perfect will,
And weaned him quite from all our earthly ways,
And it was joy to think of rest at last
And the long quiet of the heavenly days.

The maiden love had found, the mother life ;
He had found both in finding death alone ;
And, as the bridegroom murmurs to the bride,
Murmured his heart, “My Beautiful, my own !”

Oh, think not that with fancies sweet and fond
He cheated his poor heart to false repose !
Our bravest hopes are shadows vague and cold
Of better things the Spirit only knows.

The child shall grow apace ; the bridal wreath
Shall win a costlier beauty and perfume ;
While he whom we call dead shall work and wait
In other gardens of perennial bloom.

BROOKLYN, June, 1872.

THE TWO WAITINGS.

I.



DEAR hearts, you were waiting a year ago
For the glory to be revealed ;
You were wondering deeply, with bated breath,
What treasure the days concealed.

Oh, would it be this, or would it be that ?
Would it be girl or boy ?
Would it look like father or mother most ?
And what should you do for joy ?

And then one day, when the time was full,
And the spring was coming fast,
The tender grace of a life out-bloomed,
And you saw your baby at last.

Was it, or not, what you had dreamed ?
It was, and yet it was not ;
But, oh ! it was better a thousand times
Than ever you wished or thought.

II.

And now, dear hearts, you are waiting again,
While the spring is coming fast ;
For the baby that was a future dream
Is now a dream of the past ;

A dream of sunshine, and all that's sweet ,
Of all that is pure and bright ;
Of eyes that were blue as the sky by day,
And as soft as the stars by night.

You are waiting again for the fulness of time,
And the glory to be revealed ;
You are wondering deeply, with aching hearts,
What treasure is now concealed.

Oh, will she be this, or will she be that ?
And what will there be in her face
That will tell you sure that she is your own
When you meet in the heavenly place ?

As it was before, it will be again,
 Fashion your dream as you will ;
 When the veil is rent, and the glory is seen,
 It will more than your hope fulfil.

APRIL, 1873.

WHERE?



HAT is her body lying there,
 So sweetly still,
 As if but sleep had worked thereon
 Its perfect will.

The violets strewn about her seem
 To haunt her rest ;
 And, as in dreams, she clasps the rose
 Upon her breast.

How strange it is we are so sure
She is not there,
 Though all her precious outwardness
 Is still so fair !

For we have seen her just as still
 Full oft before ;
 But now we know those drowsy lids
 Will ope no more.

She is not there ; and, if not there,
Where must she be ?
Elsewhere or nowhere, that at least
Our thought can see.

Nowhere ? But then — oh, shallow thought ! —
She is no more.
The most has perished, but the least
Is as before.

This cannot perish ; this may change
From form to form ;
In grass and blossom reaching up
To sun and storm.

A thousand summers shall grow pale
Through all the land,
And still her precious dust shall lie
In God's right hand ;

And, lying there, shall take the shape
He thinketh best,
But never lovelier than is now
On it impressed.

And shall the garment that she wore
Exist so long,
And she that wore it be — as is
An ended song ?

An ended song? But even that
Is somewhere still,
It doth the heart with burden sweet
Of memory fill.

May not her Somewhere be as much
As that; no more?
To walk in dream-land up and down
A sobbing shore?

To live in deeds, for her dear sake
Made pure and true;
In great aspirings that from her
Their being drew.

But that which lieth there, so still,
In grass and flower
Shall live again, nor less for that
Be memory's dower.

And shall the mask she wore have thus
A twofold life,
And she that wore it only live
Where thought is rife?

And so from Nowhere back my heart
Returns in glee;
She is not there, since, having been,
She still must be.

But, oh ! how vast and dim appears
That Elsewhere land,
Where she, with others gone before,
Walks hand in hand !

My thought goes forth to seek her there,
But soon returns,
Dazed by that rose of light wherein
Her spirit burns.

Content to leave her there in peace
With her dear God,
It wanders in the earthly paths
Her feet have trod.

Then from her high and holy place,
Full soon I know,
Her thought sweeps down, my thought to meet
With music low.

With such sweet trysts as these my soul
Can be content,
Until my soul with hers again
In heaven is blent.

If thou in thy new home canst be
As patient, Sweet,
Our days will be most happy till
Again we meet.

THEIR THOUGHTS AND OUR THOUGHTS.

F. A. B. AND J. E. C.



IX years have faded since she went away,
Six years for her to live in heavenly places,
To learn the look of blessed angel faces ;
Six years to grow as only angels may.

I wonder oft what she is doing there,
By the still waters that for ever flow ;
What mighty secrets she has come to know ;
What graces won, divinely sweet and fair.

I wonder whom of those that went before,
And those that followed on her shining way,
She has met there in heaven's auroral day,
And if they talk their earth life o'er and o'er.

I think this very morning they are met,
She and one other only three years gone,
In some dear place in heaven secure and lone,
To talk of things they never can forget.

For I am sure that naught of their new life,
No grace or glory that is there revealed,
The fountains of past love has ever sealed ;—
That these will ever be with sweetness rife.

I cannot think of them as they are now,
Of the new light that shines upon their faces ;
I cannot image forth their angel graces ;
And I am glad, so glad, that it is so.

We shall get used to such things by and by ;
The angels will not miss the look they wore ;
For us they wear the look they wore before ;
No other look with that, for us, can vie.

So we will think of them just as they were,
Their voices sweet and all their pleasant ways ;
And thoughts like these shall help us through
the days
Until we go to meet them where they are.

MARBLEHEAD, July, 1872.



RECOGNITION.



WHEN souls that have put off their mortal gear
 Stand in the pure, sweet light of heaven's
 day,
 And wondering deeply what to do or say,
 And trembling more with rapture than with
 fear,
 Desire some token of their friends most dear,
 Who there some time have made their happy stay,
 And much have longed for them to come that way,
 What shall it be, this sign of hope and cheer?
 Shall it be tone of voice or glance of eye?
 Shall it be touch of hand or gleam of hair
 Blown back from spirit-brows by heaven's air, —
 Things which of old we knew our dearest by?
 Oh, naught of this ; but, if our love is true,
 Some secret sense shall cry, 'Tis you and — you !

IDENTITY.



OW shall I know myself when I have come
To that strange land beyond the sea of death,
Ere the first voice that speaks with heavenly
breath

Shall, out of all the sweet and murmurous hum,
Call me by name? How know ere I am known
That I am he who once in other spheres
Drank to the lees so many golden years
And called so many loving hearts my own?
Doubtless, my God, in ways I cannot guess,
Thou wilt reveal me to my doubting sense;
But, O my love, the sign that most shall bless,
And bring the swiftest, surest confidence,
Shall be that in my inmost heart I find
The thought of thee so lovingly enshrined.

MAY, 1876.

WITH A BOOK OF BALLADS.

“ The time is short.”



WEET wife, no ballad, when our days are o'er,
Shall tell the story of our peace and pain ;
One little grave shall hold our common dust,
And feel the fresh'ning of the summer rain.

A few short years, mayhap, our names shall live
In children's voices, or their children's sweet ;
Then all shall be as if we had not known
This joy of life which is so strange and fleet.

Yet none the less, so long as life shall last,
We will drink deep of joy's eternal spring ;
Ay, live as if this life must be our all, —
As if swift death would sleep eternal bring.

The time *is* short ; the more the reason then
For filling it as full as it can hold
With thrills of beauty, yearnings for the truth,
And joys of love and labor manifold.

Then should it chance, as we would fain believe,
Life's glory waits us in some other sphere,
Its first great joy shall be we did not miss
God's meaning in the glory that is here.

THE HEART OF IT.

Written upon finding at West Point a blue-bird's nest in an unfilled bombshell.



SUMMER'S day in leafy June ;
The birds were all in sweetest tune,
The roses at their best ;
But fairest of all things to see,
That perfect day in June for me,
A blue-bird's peaceful nest.

I found it in a hollow shell
Which crowned, as I remember well,
A shapely pyramid ;
Five little eggs were also there,
Blue as the sky when 'tis most fair,
Half in the grasses hid.

O favored shell ! whose kindred went
On cruel errands to be sent,
To mutilate and kill ;
Whilst thou, removed from all the strife,
Dost feel with love and dawning life
Thy bosom gently thrill.

I said, "This thing which here I see
Shall be a precious prophecy
Of what the world shall win,
When all the days of war shall cease,
And all the blessed years of peace
Shall gloriously begin."

And better yet : peace *after* war
Hath many an ugly rent and scar
For time to smooth away ;
But peace *in* war doth not await
A blessing coming slow and late, —
Its blessing is to-day.

My bird's-nest in the hollow shell,
A heaven miniature in hell,
Shall symbol be of this :
That in and through and over all,
Whatever seeming curse befall,
God's love for ever is.

He doth not wait till war is done,
And all its barren victories won,
To enter at the door ;
But in the furnace of the strife
He bears for aye a charmed life,
And blesses evermore.

Deep at the heart of all our pain,
In loss as surely as in gain,
His love abideth still.
Let come what will, my feet shall stand
On this firm rock at His right hand :
“ Father, it is Thy will.”

June, 1867.

HER CHRISTMAS.



HE happy town is all astir,
The merry crowds go up and down,
The bells the happy voices drown.
But what is all of this to her?

It *was* so much ; for many a day,
This pleasant Christmas time had been
Her sweetest music ; blessed din,
From o'er the hills and far away.

And she was full of little schemes,
In loving-wise of help and cheer ;
Life was so sweet and love so dear ;
They filled the night with happy dreams.

And now the wished-for day is come ;
There 's light and laughter everywhere ;
But she is lying silent there :
Her eyes are closed, her lips are dumb.

Love could not stay her fleeting breath ;
On Christmas eve it fluttered low ;
Then Christmas morning came, and, oh,
How gentle was the face of death !

Her Christmas ! Brings the day to her —
“ He gives to His beloved sleep ” —
Only this gift of slumber deep,
Too deep for any voice to stir,

Call on her as we may ? Not so :
Oh, gift with grace diviner fraught
Than any to the living brought ! —
What follows after death to know.

Dearest, such knowledge is for thee ;
And so thy Christmas joy is more
Than swells on any mortal shore
That hears the moaning of the sea.

THE TRYSTING-PLACE.

“Canst thou by searching find out God?”



FRIEND have I, true lover of my soul,
Whose lightest word to me is dearer far
Than any treasure which the dark earth holds,
Or any beauty of the morning star.

When day is on my heart He enters in
And crowns it with the brightness of His grace ;
But more I joy, when night envelops me,
To feel His presence, though I miss His face.

But there are times when foolish love of self
So girdles me as with a wall of flame,
That, should He seek me, He would find me **not**,
Nor answer get if He should call my name.

And other times when open to His feet
The doors of my poor house as quickly swing
As if I were a peasant, and the friend
For whom I waited had been born a king.

Thus coming once when I was at my best,
He said "My friend, I would not have thee roam ;
Dost long to see me? Go about thy work,
And I will come and visit thee at home."

And I in love with all His noble ways,
Feeling that He in nothing could do wrong,
Assented, saying, "Even so I will ;
But quickly come, and make thy visit long,

"That I may speak with Thee of hidden things,
Tell Thee alike of all my joy and pain,
And feel Thy freshness all my spirit through,
As summer's roses feel the summer rain."

And then we parted ; but another day
Had not passed over me before the crowd
Began to laugh at me and call me fool,
With here and there a voice that cried aloud,

"Come, seek with us for him who is your Friend."
And I was weak enough to them obey,
And follow them, despite my better thought,
For many a night and many a weary day.

We found him not, though ever and anon
His name we read in books that were of old,
Which said that once His presence had been sweet,
That He would come and tenderly enfold

To His warm heart some man of humble birth,
And talk with Him in language just as mild
As that which any mother might repeat
Above the cradle of her little child.

And then I said, " This glory must be mine :
With less than this I cannot be content ;"
So left the crowd to seek Him as they would,
And to my home with eager feet I went.

And what to find? My Friend awaiting me,
Here in His place as He had been before ;
And down I sank as if it ought to be
That he, my Friend, would be my Friend no more.

But He, as if, no beggar for His grace,
I came of right into His presence fair,
Lifted me up, and from my speechless face
Put back the masses of my tangled hair,

And kissed me once and kissed me twice again,
And said, " Not greater is Thy need of me
Than is my need, although it seemeth not,
Of living and communing still with Thee."

My words are false, and yet my thoughts are true ;
My friend is God, and ever by His grace,
Although by searching I can find Him not,
My soul doth serve us for a trysting-place.

HIS FORTUNE.

W. H. W.



IN the pleasant time of spring
Came my noble friend to me,
Full of life as any leaf
Budding on the orchard tree.

“I am going forth,” he said,
“Sailing down the busy world :
Fame and fortune I must make
Ere again my sails are furled.”

Comes the winter crisp and clear :
What was that the message said ?
Spring will come another year :
Not for him, for he is — dead !

Yes, thou hast made thy fortune, noble friend !
We shall live on, and coax with weary toil
Some scanty pittance from the grudging soil,

Or strain an aching back long years to tend
Sticks in the desert, striving still to mend
 Some social wrong, or with a few to moil
 For truths from which the many still recoil :
Long is the way and doubtful is the end.
But thou hast made thy fortune, found release
 From sordid care and every grief and pain ;
 Such things shall trouble thee no more again :
From every sorrow thine is sweet surcease.
 Sailing straight on across the unfathomed main,
Death hast thou found, and finding that is peace.

1879.



HEARD FROM.



LODDING a weary way, before untried,
It chanced I came upon a group of men
Busy about their work with eager ken.
I spoke to them of one who late had died, —
Knowing that he along this country-side
Had toiled with such as these, o'er hill and fen ;
Asked, had they known my friend? Oh, gladness when
Man after man with tender voice replied,
And spoke his praise ; told of his earnest will,
The love which they had borne him deep and true,
The generous passion of his noble skill,
Still doing well whate'er was his to do.
Again afoot, I said, " Pray God that I
May so be *heard from* when I come to die."

A TALISMAN.



O you have come, my daughter, to the place
Where childhood ends and maidenhood begins,
And I, straight-looking in your happy face,
Where joy o'er fear its daily victory wins
And hangs its laughing banners in your eyes,
Make question what to bring you, — what the gift
That shall be more to you than any prize
Of gems and gold, as out you gayly drift
On the great, wide, immeasurable sea?
I have resolved. Take it, and to thy heart
Hold it for talisman in years to be.
Then if, perchance, our ways are far apart,
Life- or death-severed, say, “This sacred trust
He gave me once : We *can* do what we *must*.”

November 25, 1883.

A DEDICATION.



MY darling boy, kissed but a moment since,
And laid away all rosy in the dark,
Is talking to himself. What does he say?
Not much, in truth, that I can understand ;
But now and then, among the pretty sounds
That he is making, falls upon my ear
My name. And then the sand-man softly comes
Upon him and he sleeps.

And what am I,
Here in my book, but as a little child
Trying to cheer the big and silent dark
With foolish words? But listen, O my God,
My Father, and among them thou shalt hear
Thy name. And soon I too shall sleep.
When I awake I shall be still with thee.

IN NAZARETH TOWN.

M A R Y.

*S*INGING of one who bore this sweetest name
Long, long ago, in bygone centuries,
Mother of One for whom our Christmas trees
Are green and bright with never-ending fame,
I think of one whom HAVING seen we love,
A mother Mary of these latter days,—
Mother and wife and friend whose simplest praise
The memory of her meekness would reprove;
Who, bound long years, was patient in her pain,
And still forgot her own in others' woe.
Blessing of blessings and immortal gain,
Such grace as hers to so divinely know;
Daring believe that not His mother trod
With whiter feet this highway of our God!

IN NAZARETH TOWN.



S to the rose's petals pure
The rose's heart of gold,
Was Nazareth to the encircling hills
In the brave days of old.

The narrow street, a straggling vine,
Against the hillside clung ;
And from its stem the village homes
In meagre clusters hung.

And down the street, with eager feet,
The village mothers came :
Let fancy follow without fear,
And listen void of blame.

A simple tale they have to tell,
The bubbling spring beside :
The like doth come a thousand times
By every time and tide.

No more than this, — enough of bliss
For Mary, mother mild, —
Upon her breast there lies at rest
A little new-born child.

O happy women at the well,
For Mary's sake so glad,
Be tender with the tiny babe
And with the growing lad !

Make sweet and pleasant to his feet
The path while yet you may ;
For steep and rough it yet shall be
For many a weary day.

The women climb the rugged street,
And two there are that come
With pleasant chatter to the door
Of good-man Joseph's home.

With them, unseen, we enter in :
We see the humble state ;
The gentle mother, innocent
Of all the impending fate.

How soft she sleeps, the blessed child
Upon her bended arm !
How far away they seem to-day
From all the things that harm !

O mother Mary, closer press
Your baby to your heart !
There comes a day when nothing may
Allay its cruel smart.

Those little feet have errands long
For God and man to go ;
Those little hands must break the chains
Of many a grinding woe.

That little piping voice shall wax
So terrible and strong,
That it shall shatter down the walls
Of many an ancient wrong.

O happy mother, were it thine
To see, as we can see,
All the fierce pain of heart and brain
That waits for him and thee, —

The wrath of men, the hate, the scorn,
The tried and tempted will,
The friends that falter and betray,
The enemies that kill, —

Would strength be thine to bear the load,
To choose the fateful way
For him for whom thy life has gone
In pledge this happy day?

We may not guess ; nor yet conceive
Would joy or pain be thine,
If thou with prescient heart couldst all
The coming years divine, —

Couldst see beyond the scourge and cross,
Beyond the curse and shame,
Millenniums of godhead wait
To crown his glorious name.

Doth even now some vision come
Of all the things to be,
That troubled looks across thy face
Like conscious shadows flee ?

Till thou dost start, and seem to cry :
“ Oh, less and less of this !
Your God is not the man I bore,
Whose lips I dared to kiss.”

Dear mother of the holy child,
Thy plea is not in vain :
Behold the God of centuries long
Becomes a man again !

Fade out the sophist's tangled schemes
As visions of the night ;
Breaks in the dawn of better things
As breaks the morning light.

O brother of the righteous will,
O brother full of grace !
Once more the human glory bathes
Thy grave and earnest face.

But all of this to thee is strange,
As, safe from every harm,
Thou liest soft and warm and sweet
Upon thy mother's arm.

And little dream the village folk,
Upon the hillside brown,
What wondrous fame their Jesus' name
Shall bring to Nazareth town.

December 25, 1882.



A LEGEND OF GOOD POETS.


DELIVERED JUNE 25, 1885, TO THE PHI BETA KAPPA
FRATERNITY OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

INSCRIBED TO

MY FRIEND AND TEACHER

FREDERIC HENRY HEDGE.

A LEGEND OF GOOD POETS.

“E bold,” the legend ran, “Be bold,”
Then, like a billow, backward rolled
And broken, said, “Be not too bold.”

Alas ! too bold, I fear, am I,
A slender oaten reed to try
Where trumpets echo to the sky.

If but the will could find a way,
So rare a music would I play
That one should to the other say,

“This fellow ne’er before was seen
Here in our broad and fair demesne ;
And yet he pipeth well, I ween.”

Oh for one spark of such a fire
As that which, flaming high and higher,
Smokeless, we saw at length expire !

It sweetened all the atmosphere
With pure affections, and with dear
Homekeeping thoughts to help and cheer.

Beneath your elms he walks no more ;
His foot no longer treads the floor
Whereon our greatest trod of yore.

Gone ! but his place is kept apart ;
Wide as the range of human art
He is — the Poet of the Heart.

And where is he, the gentle seer,
Whose thought and speech were cool and clear
As mornings of the opening year?

Eyes was he to our feeble sight,
Ears to our deafness, and a light
On every path of truth and right.

He comes no more ; but, should he roam
Wide as the all-embracing dome
Of heaven, he still would be at home.

Still the One Presence finding near
In every place ; without a fear,
Still facing God with hope and cheer.

Him, too, we miss, whom busiest days
In the great city's crowded ways
Spoiled not for Nature's simple praise.

Still could his fine, attentive ear
The laughing brooklet's music hear,
Far off in Hampshire's mellowing year.

And well his loving memory knew
The gentian's fringes blue, — *so* blue ! —
And wet with autumn's shining dew.

The dateless rocks, the lordly trees, —
Sweeter their runic mysteries
To him than honey to the bees.

All these are gone. Katahdin strong,
Wachusett, Greylock, cry, " How long
Since we have heard their pleasant song ! "

Now, God be praised that some remain,
To take a little from our pain
For those we may not see again !

One is our " Friend " : what sweeter praise !
Oh, never may the shortening days
So bind with snow his cheerful ways

But they may throng with couriers fleet,
Each with some message fond and sweet,
To lay, with reverence, at his feet !

From fields of cotton, rice, and cane,
They come as thick as hurrying rain.
Ride, ride ! for soon 't will be in vain.

Thrice happy soul, who, in the day
When Freedom owns no rival sway,
Might, and yet would not, gladly say : —

“ I waited not till thousands came,
Till Justice earned but little blame ;
But in her days of evil fame,

“ When she had few who loved her well, —
And earth for these was very hell, —
When martyred Lovejoy bleeding fell,

“ I stood and battled on her side ;
Gladly for her would then have died ;
Now, God for this be glorified ! ”

No sham was Whittier's Quaker gun :
With shattering words, it rent the dun
Of battle, till the day was won.

Yet oft, in pauses of the fight,
His songs would be as clear and bright
As stars in winter's holiest night.

And still of Truth that maketh free
He sings, and of the Blessed Three,
The greatest of them Charity.

Late into heaven may he return !
Long may his "triumph" be to learn
What love a noble life can earn !

Our Mother's breast he never knew ;
But still abide her merriest two :
What can I sing of them to you

That shall not to your reverence seem
Faint as a dream within a dream,
When morning comes with scattering gleam ?

Sole builder of the one-horse shay !
Like that hast thou no charm to stay
A hundred years unto a day ;

Still sound as that in every part,
Dear Autocrat, as now thou art,
Of every earnest, loving heart ?

Thou who hast sung "Contentment" well,
Come, now the ominous secret tell
Of this, without thy magic spell.

Was never feast so humble found
That, once by thee with laughter crowned,
It did not wondrously abound.

And, when in Freedom's darkest year
Men's hearts were choked with doubt and fear,
Thy songs were full of hope and cheer.

O friend, we never can forget
With what warm tears our eyes were wet
At thy "We have a country yet" !

And, till that word is true no more,
Her sons shall love thy pleasant lore,
And bless thee for its shining store.

And thou, our Laureate, home returned
With all the honors thou hast earned,
How have our hearts within us burned

With joy and pride at every hit
Made by thy never-failing wit
For each occasion fine and fit !

Thy countless dinners — every one
We have enjoyed ; the talk begun,
Impatient till the rest were done,

We waited for thy voice. How clear
The ringing laugh, the echoing cheer,
Sounded across from there to here !

But deeper joy our bosoms stirred
When came thy calmest, bravest word,
“ Democracy ! ” then most preferred

When all the Old World could impart
Of ordered custom, perfect art,
Had laid their spell upon thy heart.

No “ land of broken promise ” ours,
As once we feared : her genius flowers
In blossoms rude ; her crescent powers

Are stark and crass, but she shall rise
To every height of great emprise
Until her forehead strikes the skies.

Come back, and help her once again !
Braid yet once more thy whip, as when
The temple gold was changed for men !

Say not that *once* the hour is given
To every nation under heaven
To make the scales of justice even.

Say that each new, untarnished day
A "Present Crisis" is, and they
Are wise who always watch and pray.

Say what thou wilt, thou shalt not find
Thou canst a heavier burden bind
Than suits our glad and willing mind,

To seek the things that make for peace,
To strive for freedom's large increase
Till every bond shall find release.

From now till then, whatever ban
Awaits thee from the wrath of man,
Thy place be ever in the van.

Our fainting courage reinspire,
Our spirits touch with quickening fire
From every heaven of desire.

Then, when thy genial spirits fail,
True knight, beyond the mortal veil
Thine eyes shall see the Holy Grail.

.

A Legend of Good Poets : these
With sweet consenting ministries
Have served us many a golden year
With beakers of immortal cheer.

What shall we do when these are gone ?
The songs they sang will still live on :
True bards may yield their vital breath ;
True songs, — for them there is no death.

Still up and down the earth they go,
Whatever worth may sleep below :
Forever good, forever fair,
They bring us strength to do and bear.

And ne'er was living Poet yet
Who could beguile men to forget
The poets who had gone to be
With the immortal company.

When Homer sang, men sighed in vain
For Hesiod's old Saturnian strain ;
When Dante went the hopeless way,
Vergilius was his guide and stay.

The living Shakspeare walked unknown
With those who should have been his own,
Still backward yearning for the day
When Chaucer rode his pilgrim way.

'T was Homer dead whose Ilion tall
Time could not batter to its fall ;
'T was Dante 'neath his weight of pride
Bent low upon that mountain's side,

Where well he knew his place would be,
Whose vision of the mystic Three,
And much beside, the Centuries gave
For watchers at his lonely grave.

When Shakspeare slept with small renown
In Avon's poor provincial town,
Then, not till then, his fame began
To take the heavens for its span.

Great soul, wherever thou dost fare,
In the wide space of upper air,
Does any wonder touch thee more
Than this immeasurable store

Of honor which the world has brought
At length to thy imperial thought ;
Save only that thyself couldst know
Thyself so little here below ?

.

But shall the mighty poets who are dead,
And those whom still our love is holding back,
When they are gone, suffice the need of men,
Or shall our eager, unappeasèd lack

Demand new fountains, as occasions new
Shall lead for many a hot and weary day
In desert places, where the ancient wells,
Once so refreshing, are so far away ?

I dearly love the legend which the lore
Talmudic once to him of Tarsus gave, —
The Legend of the Rock, — the prophet's stroke
Quick-answering with cool and limpid wave

For man and beast sufficing ; and then came
The greatest wonder, up and down the land
The people wandered, with the blessed rock
Of their salvation ever close at hand.

It journeyed with them as they journeyed on ;
Hunger they might, but they could thirst no more ;
A fountain theirs, whose measureless expense
Did but increase the illimitable store.

Behold a sign, a parable, is here
Of all that wondrous beauty of old time
Which cannot perish, but with us remains
As fresh and fair as in its earliest prime

From age to age ; a Journeying Rock, it pours
A flood of coolness on the burning sand ;
Heartened once more, we to each other cry,
“ And is not this, indeed, the Promised Land ? ”

.

Be not deceived : the mighty poets dead,
Whose words will ever be entreaured
In loving hearts, — for all their golden speech,
The hundredth part of all has not been said.

Nay ; nor can all the great ones who abide
Still here with us upon this mortal side,
When they have sung their hearts out to the full,
Exhaust the flood of Beauty's boundless tide.

There are who tell us that great Pan is dead,
And all the Muses from the earth have fled,
Save only Clio and Urania ;
And these with mortals have been basely wed.

Nay ; but Terpsichore and Erato
Still hand in hand, as ever, bravely go ;
Still whirl the inverted saucers round and round,
And in a flood the sensual numbers flow.

“ Ah ! but Melpomene, — she comes no more,
Or with faint echoes of the great of yore !
And grand Calliope, — her epic strain
Is silent now on every sea and shore.

“ But, most of all, Polymnia, we crave
Thy solemn hymn, thy vast and thund'rous wave
Of music, breaking at our feet, to drown
The noise that maddens and the fiends that rave.”

Lift up your hearts ! These mournful prophecies
Suit not the measure of those high degrees
We have attained ; nor will, though we should drink
The cup of sorrow to its very lees.

Comes not the bard who shall our Epic sing?
Yet better so than that the Muse should bring
Great Homer back, and he should cry, "Alas !
What deeds are here that have the epic ring?"

What men, what deeds, would answer to his call,
Go read in yonder glory-haunted hall !
What hearts like these, which yet were all our own,
Grew cold and still by Priam's fated wall?

And you, so faithless, and so full of dread
That those fair streams, with awe and wonder fed
From countless heights, will shrink away to naught,
Till great Religion shall herself be dead, —

For all these changes that your hearts appall
The bending heavens shall not stoop nor fall.
Beyond the worst, the best shall come again ;
And God himself shall then be all in all.

"The more thou searchest," said the seer of old,
"The greater wonders shall thine eyes behold ;"
And each new wonder, greater than the last,
With tenderer mystery shall thy heart enfold.

"Lo here !" "Lo there !" the former prophets cried :
No here nor there hath now the Spirit's tide ;
Thrills with one voice the atom and the sphere,
"Yea, it is I, and there is none beside !"

Shall not the sense that these great things are so
The Poet's spirit fill and overflow?

Shall he not sing a braver, sweeter song
For every marvel we have come to know?

Shall not this teeming, rushing, roaring time
Give warmer pulses to his eager rhyme?

Shall not its hopes, its fears, its passionate pain,
Make all his bells to deeper music chime?

Yea and Amen ! For those who listen well
Begins that music even now to swell ;

And it shall grow from year to goodlier year,
Till it shall smite the doors of every hell

That man has made ; until, for all who grope
In blinding darkness without any hope,

Light shall spring up, with freedom wide and sweet
As this June heaven's blue and boundless cope.



We shall not live to see that glorious day :
Far off, too far, its full meridian ray !

But, oh, how bright its earliest beams, that lend
Their cheerful radiance to our steadfast way !

HYMNS AND PRAISES.

HYMNS AND PRAISES.



FOR THE LAST TIME.

PLYMOUTH CHURCH, FEB. 27, 1887.



HE preacher's evening task was done,
The crowd had gone away ;
But something pleaded with his heart
A little while to stay.

For him alone the organ pealed ;
For him alone the choir
Sang soft and low, in sweet accord,
The song of his desire, —

“ I heard the voice of Jesus say,
‘ Come, weary one, and rest.’ ”
What prophecy for him was there
How little any guessed !

As lovingly he lingered there,
Ere yet the music died,
There came two children from the street,
Unfearing to his side.

The old man bowed, and, lifting up
A soiled and homeless face,
He kissed it as a mother might,
Then turned to leave the place.

On either side the children trod,
And on the left and right
A loving hand on either pressed, —
So out into the night.

Out, little thinking as he went
That never any more
His willing feet should inward go
That sacred threshold o'er.

And it was well : more fit good-by
No genius could devise ;
No thoughtfulness of loving hearts,
No wisdom of the wise.

The "little ones" had always been
His chiefest joy and care :
With them alone let him go forth,
And God be with them there.

And down the future he shall go,
And through the enfranchised land,
A loving smile upon his lips,
A child on either hand.

ANOTHER YEAR.



HAT this shall be a better year
Than any passed away,
I dare not at its open door
To wish or hope or pray.

Not that the years already gone
Were wearisome and lone ;
That so with hope too long deferred
My heart has timid grown.

Nay, rather that they all have been
So sweet to me and good,
That if for better I should ask
'Twould seem ingratitude.

And so with things far off and strange
I do not care to cope,
But look in Memory's face and learn
What largess I may hope.

Another year of setting suns,
Of stars by night revealed,
Of springing grass, of tender buds
By Winter's snow concealed.

Another year of Summer's glow,
Of Autumn's gold and brown,
Of waving fields, and ruddy fruit
The branches weighing down.

Another year of happy work,
That better is than play ;
Of simple cares, and love that grows
More sweet from day to day.

Another year of baby mirth
And childhood's blessed ways,
Of thinker's thought and prophet's dream
And poet's tender lays.

Another year at Beauty's feast,
At every moment spread,
Of silent hours when grow distinct
The voices of the dead.

Another year to follow hard
Where better souls have trod ;
Another year of life's delight,
Another year of God.

MUGFORD'S VICTORY.

Read in Marblehead, Mass., May 17, 1876, on the hundredth anniversary of the death of Captain James Mugford.



OUR mother, the pride of us all,
She sits on her crags by the shore,
And her feet they are wet with the waves
Whose foam is as flowers from the graves
Of her sons whom she welcomes no more,
And who answer no more to her call.

Amid weeds and sea-tangle and shells
They are buried far down in the deep, —
The deep which they loved to career.
Oh, might we awake them from sleep !
Oh, might they our voices but hear,
And the sound of our holiday bells !

Can it be she is thinking of them,
Her face is so proud and so still,
And her lashes are moistened with tears ?
Ho, little ones ! pluck at her hem,
Her lap with your jollity fill,
And ask of her thoughts and her fears.

“ Fears ! ” — we have roused her at last ;
See ! her lips part with a smile,
And laughter breaks forth from her eyes, —
“ Fears ! whence should they ever arise
In our hearts, O my children, the while
We can remember the past ?

“ Can remember that morning of May,
When Mugford went forth with his men,
Twenty, and all of them ours.
'T is a hundred years to a day,
And the sea and the shore are as then,
And as bright are the grass and the flowers ;
But our twenty — they come not again !

“ He had heard of the terrible need
Of the patriot army there
In Boston town. Now for a deed
To save it from despair !
To thrill with joy the great commander's heart,
And hope new-born to all the land impart !

“ ‘ Hope ! ’ ay ; that was the very name
Of the good ship that came
From England far away,
Laden with enginery of death,
Food for the cannon's fiery breath ;

Hope-laden for great Washington,
Who, but for her, was quite undone
A hundred years ago to-day.

“ ‘Oh, but to meet her there,
And grapple with her fair,
Out in the open bay !’
Mugford to Glover said.
How could he answer nay?
And Mugford sailed away,
Brave heart and newly wed.

“ But what are woman’s tears,
And rosy cheeks made pale,
To one who far off hears
The generations hail
A deed like this we celebrate to-day,
A hundred years since Mugford sailed away !

“ I love to picture him,
Clear-eyed and strong of limb,
Gazing his last upon the rocky shore
His feet should press no more ;
Seeing the tall church-steeple fade away
In distance soft and gray ;
So dropping down below the horizon’s rim
Where fame awaited him.

“Slow sailing from the east his victim came.
They met ; brief parley ; struggle brief and tame,
And she was ours ;
In Boston harbor safe ere set of sun,
Great joy for Washington !
But heavy grew the hours
On Mugford's hands, longing to bring to me,
His mother proud, news of his victory ;
But that was not to be !

“Abreast Nantasket's narrow strip of gray
The British cruisers lay :
They saw the daring skipper dropping down
From the much hated rebel-haunted town,
And in the twilight dim
Their boats awaited him,
While wind and tide conspired
To grant what they desired.

“Thickly they swarmed about his tiny craft ;
But Mugford gayly laughed
And gave them blow for blow ;
And many a hapless foe
Went hurtling down below.
Upon the schooner's rail
Fell, like a thresher's flail,
The strokes that beat the soul and sense apart,
And pistol-crack through many an eager heart

Sent deadly hail.
But when the fight was o'er
Brave Mugford was no more.
Crying, with death-white lip,
‘Boys, don’t give up the ship!’
His soul struck out for heaven’s peaceful shore.

“We gave him burial meet;
Through every sobbing street
A thousand men marched with their arms reversed;
And Parson Story told,
In sentences of gold,
The tale since then a thousand times rehearsed.”

Such is the story she tells,
Our mother, the pride of us all.
Ring out your music, O bells,
That ever such things could befall!
Ring not for Mugford alone,
Ring for the twenty unknown,
Who fought hand-to-hand at his side,
Who saw his last look when he died,
And who brought him, though dead, to his own!

AN ODE

FOR THE BROOKLYN CELEBRATION OF THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF CHANNING'S BIRTH, APRIL 7, 1880.



HUNDRED years ago to-day!
 How often in this latter time,
 In fond memorial speech or rhyme,
 Has it been ours these words to say!

A hundred years to-day, we said,
 Since Concord bridge and Lexington
 Saw the great struggle well begun
 And the first heroes lying dead.

A hundred years since Bunker Hill
 Saw the red-coated foemen reel
 Once and again before the steel
 Of Prescott's men, victorious still

In their defeat : a hundred years
 Since Independence bell rang out
 To all the people round about,
 Who answered it with deafening cheers,

Proclaiming, spite the scorner's scorn,
That then and there — the womb of Time
Through sufferance triumphing sublime —
Another nation had been born.

“All men are equal in their birth,”
Rang out the steeple-rocking bell :
Rejoice, O heaven! Give heed, O hell !
Here *was* good news to all the earth.

And still our hearts have kept the count
Of things that daily brought more near,
Through various hap of hope or fear,
The pattern visioned in the mount.

Nor yet the tale is fully told
Of all the years that brought us pain,
And, through the age of iron, again
The dawning of the age of gold.

But naught of this has brought us here,
With the old saying on our lips,
What time the rolling planet dips
Into the spring-tide of the year.

Apart from all the dire alarms
Of field and flood in that old time,
With reverent feet our fancies climb
To where a mother's circling arms

Enraptured hold a babe new born ;
And who was there to prophesy,
Though loving hearts beat strong and high,
Of what a day this was the morn?

For in that life but just begun
The prescient fates a gift had bound,
As dear to man as any found
Within the courses of the sun.

A gift of manhood strong and wise,
Nor foreign to the lowliest earth,
Whereon the Word has human birth,
Howe'er conversant with the skies.

A hundred years ago to-day
Since Channing's individual life
From out the depths of being, rife
With spiritual essence, found a way,

And welcome here, and forces kind
To gently nurse his growing power
With steady help until the flower
Of instinct was a conscious mind.

To him the sea its message brought,
Filling his mind with sacred awe,
What time his eye enraptured saw
Its wildest tumult, or he caught

From its deep calm some peace of heart.

To him the ages brought their lore
Of books, and living men their store
Of thought ; and still the better part

Of all his nurture was the eye
Turned inward, seeking in the mind
Some higher, deeper law to find
Than that which spheres the starry sky.

And so the youth to manhood came :
A being frail, — with nameless eyes,
That seemed to look on Paradise, —
As clear as dew, as clean as flame.

He willed in quiet to abide,
Leading his flock through pastures green,
And by the waters still, where lean
The mystic trees on either side.

But on his listening ear there fell
The jarring discord of the sects,
Still making, with their war of texts,
The pleasant earth a kind of hell.

He saw the Father's sacred name
Made dim by Calvary's suffering rood ;
Man devil-born, — a spawning flood,
Engendering naught but curse and shame.

He saw the freedom of the mind
 Denied, and doubt esteemed a crime, —
 The path whereby the boldest climb
To heights which cowards never find.

He saw the manhood which to him
 Was image of the highest God
 Trodden, as if it were a clod,
'Neath slavery's idol-chariot grim.

He saw it fouled with various sin,
 Sick'ning from lack of air and light,
 Abjuring glories infinite
To fatten at the sensual bin.

He heard and saw : his shepherd's rod
 With grieving heart he broke in twain ;
 The wondering world beheld again
A prophet of the living God.

Then, as of old, was heard a voice :
 “ His way prepare,” and, “ Come with me,
 All ye that heavy-laden be ;
Take up *my* burden and rejoice ! ”

It rang through all the sleepy land
 In tones so sweet and silver clear,
 The waking people seemed to hear
The accents of divine command.

The statesman heard it in his place ;
The oppressor in his cursèd field ;
And hearts beyond the ocean yield
Allegiance to his truth and grace.

Our Father, God ; our Brother, man, —
On these commandments twain he hung
The law and prophets all ; and rung —
For all the churches' eager ban —

A hundred changes deep and strong ;
Let who would hear him or forbear,
The ancient lie he would not spare,
The doubtful right, the vested wrong.

What words were his of purest flame,
When, straining up from height to height,
He felt the Presence infinite,
And named the Everlasting Name ?

With him the thought and deed were one :
Man was indeed the Son of God ;
“ What, strike a man ! ” ¹ Break every rod
Of hate beneath the all-seeing sun !

So greatly born, how dare to trail
Our festal garlands in the mire !
How dare *not* evermore aspire
To Him who is within the veil !

¹ His argument against flogging in the navy.

In weakness made each day more strong,
Softly his days went trooping past,
Till robed in beauty came the last,
And with the sun he went along :

Not to oblivion's dreamless sleep,
But, like the sun, on other lands
To shine, where other busier hands
The fields immortal sow and reap.

And he is ours ! Yes, if we dare,
Leaving the letter of his creed,
Say to his mighty spirit, " Lead ;
We follow hard ; " — yes, if no care

Is ours for aught but this : to know
What is God's truth, and knowing this
To count it still our dearest bliss
To go with that where'er it go.

So shall we go with him ; so feel
That comfort which the Spirit of Truth
Gives all who with his loving ruth
Are pledged to her for woe or weal.

O thou whom, though we have not seen,
We love ! upon our toilsome way
Be thy pure spirit as a ray
From out that Light which is too clean

Uncleanness to behold ; shine clear,
That to our dimly peering eyes
All hidden truths, all specious lies,
That which they are may straight appear.

There is no ending to thy road,
No limit to thy fleeting goal,
But speeds the ever-greatening soul
From truth to truth, from God to God.



INVOCATION.



VERLASTING, Holy One !

Many a well-belovèd son

Thou dost choose like him of old,

For Thy truth's sake to be bold.

Not by any outward sign

Dost Thou show Thy will divine ;

Deep within Thy voice doth cry,

And our spirits make reply.

Lo, we stand before Thee now,

And the silent inward vow

Thou hast heard, in that profound,

Where is neither voice nor sound ;

Thou hast heard, and Thou wilt bless

With Thy might and tenderness ;

We have come to do Thy will ;

With Thy love our spirits fill.

EASTER MORNING.



GENTLE tumult in the earth,
A murmur in the trees,
An odor faint, but passing sweet,
Upon the morning breeze, —
The heralds these, whom thou dost send,
Dear Spring, that we may know
How soon the land, from side to side,
Shall with thy beauty glow.

And 'tis by tokens faint as these,
O Truth, that makest free !
That thou dost give assurance strong
Of better things to be :
Of higher faith and holier trust ;
Of love more deep and wide ;
Of hope, whose anchor shall not break,
Whatever storms betide !

O Truth of God, it is not ours
Thy Summer to foretell,
Nor ours to taste the fruit which now
Doth in the blossom swell ;

But we are glad, and free of heart,
 That we Thy Spring have known :
 Well speed the days whose sweetest praise
 Is to be called Thine own.

1876.

THE PERFECT LAW.



GOD, we come not as of old,
 Distrustful of Thy Law,
 In hope to find Thy seamless robe
 Marred by some sudden flaw, —
 Some rent to let Thy glory through
 And make our darkness shine,
 If haply thus our souls may know
 What power and grace are Thine.

Thy seamless robe conceals Thee not
 From earnest hearts and true ;
 The glory of Thy perfectness
 Shines all its texture through ;
 And on its trailing hem we read,
 As Thou dost linger near,
 The message of a love more deep
 Than any depth of fear.

And so no more our hearts shall plead
 For miracle and sign ;
 Thy order and Thy faithfulness
 Are all in all divine :
 These are Thy revelations vast
 From earliest days of yore ;
 These are our confidence and peace ;
 We cannot wish for more.

1874.

JOHN WEISS.



VER all the land to-day,
 Where our heroes sleeping lie,
 Blooms the amaranthine flower
 That shall never fade or die.

But for us a newer grave
 Flushes with as fair a bloom, —
 Bluest of forget-me-nots
 On a stainless soldier's tomb.


He was fellow with them all,
 Wearers of the blue and gray, —
 Men who, told that they must die,
 Only asked to know the way.

Ever first in freedom's van,
Took his breast the sheaf of spears ;
Here is loss too deep for words,
Here is grief too proud for tears.

Onward, where he led the way !
Many more will have to fall
Ere the glorious banner waves
Peace and triumph over all.

DECORATION DAY, 1879.

THE MEETING-HOUSE.

“OME,” said the fathers, “let us build
A beacon here beside the sea,
And trim its lamp for those who toss
On the wide waters wearily.”

They built it broad ; they built it high ;
They crowned the work with prayer and song ;
They set a watchman in the tower
To tend the light and keep it strong.

Oh, many a frail and wandering bark
Since then has seen our beacon light,
And hastened home across the dark,
Rejoicing in the goodly sight !

Long may its starry welcome gleam ;
 Long may it guide the weary home ;
 Long may its tender message stream
 Across the waste of wind and foam !

HINGHAM, MASS., 1879.

HYMN

FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE UNITARIAN BUILDING, BOSTON, MASS.



HE Thought which Love conceived is born,
 To fact the artist's dream has grown,
 And Strength with beauty doth adorn
 Her courses fair of gleaming stone.

O God, our Father, unto Thee,
 Thy law, thy love, eternal powers,
 Thy truth which ever maketh free,
 We consecrate this home of ours.

Here may we come with pilgrim feet,
 From wanderings long and distance far,
 To bless Thee for the influence sweet
 Of faith which shines a fadeless star.

And here, as from a fountain clear
 That pours a glorious river down
 From mountain heights to cool and cheer
 A thousand leagues of turf and town,

May rise, and flow to field and mart,
A sacred stream of knowledge pure,
With quiet for the restless heart,
And strength all hardness to endure.

And here may memories great and fair
Of saints and heroes of our band
So stir our souls that we may dare,
As they, to do Thy full command.



BEFORE CHRISTMAS.



HE Christmas-time draws on apace ;
The happy crowds go up and down ;
There's joy and hope in all the town
And in each little maiden's face

A look of expectation sweet,
That comes of musing oft and long
On what that day of gift and song
Shall bring to her as offering meet.

But I will sit alone and dream
Of Him who gave the day its name ;
And think of all His wondrous fame,
And if to Him it strange doth seem

That in these happy, careless ways,
As often as the years come round,
We mark with light, and joyful sound,
His advent and His toilsome days.

And deeper still my thoughts shall go,
And ponder if He hears above,
'Mid all the heavenly peace and love,
Our weary talking to and fro ;

Our asking how it all began,
And what the secret of His power,
That since He came until this hour,
The world has said, " Behold the man ! "

Behold the man ! Behold the God !
Ah, which to say, and how, and why !
In vain our tangled reasons try
The path so many feet have trod.

O man of sorrows, man of joy ! —
Of joy for all Thy strife and scars, —
Whereso Thou art among the stars,
In peace that nothing can destroy, —

Though we our voices may not blend
With that hoarse chant the centuries raise,
Yet is it not a sweeter praise
To say, " Our brother and our friend " ?

And if beyond this verge of time,
We know Thee better as Thou art,
Wilt Thou not clasp us heart to heart,
As fills our ears the heavenly chime ?

MODJESKA AS ROSALIND.



IS said, sweet singing always makes us sad ;
But how could thy sweet playing serve us so ?
When thou as Rosalind didst bravely go
To the wild wood, in such strange habit clad
As made thee seem a swashing martial lad,
To thy Orlando ; but to us — ah, no !
Such grace as thine no man could ever show.
Why, seeing that, were we not wholly glad ?
To eye and ear each moment was delight.
Not for our own sakes were we sad at heart,
But that Will Shakspeare, from death's envious night,
Could not come back to see thy perfect art ;
That he might say, O sweet beyond compare !
I dreamed of nothing that was half so fair.

TO A. W. R.

ON READING HER BOOK OF POEMS CALLED "THE RING OF
AMETHYST."



IT came to me one perfect summer day
Amid the tender beauty of the hills,
Whose every niche a poet's memory fills
With echoes of his own resounding lay.
Died out the children's voices at their play,
While sweet for me as lapse of mountain rills,
Or fragrance that some rose's heart distils,
Your gentle verses had with me their way.
I read and read : the scene was all forgot ;
Down dropped the sun above the poet's home ;
The first faint stars came out in heaven's dome ;
Alone with you, all other things were not ;
Till sudden, pausing, lo, the purple mist
Had made the hills *a ring of amethyst !*

CHESTERFIELD, July 5, 1878.

CHARLES SUMNER.

Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.

Y, look around ; but thou may'st not behold
Aught built of stone and carved magnificent,
With dome or spire high up towards heaven
sent,
And blazoned all with crimson and with gold.
By no such wonders can his worth be told ;
Not such indeed shall be his monument,
Our statesman, who upon God's errands went,
For freedom's sake the boldest of the bold.
But look around, and say what thou dost see ;
Or think it solemnly with bated breath :
A nation with no man who is not free ;
A nation living after years of death ;
And yet to live a life more pure and high
Because this man for her could live and die.

MARCH, 1874.

TO FREDERIC HENRY HEDGE.

EIGHTY YEARS OLD, DEC. 12, 1885.



NOT because thou hast sat beside the King
At the high feast ; nor yet because the queen,
Our “ rare pale Margaret,” thou hast often seen :
For naught of this, O friend, to thee we bring,
This day, our simple, heartfelt offering
Of thanks and praise ; but for that thou hast been
Thyself one of the royal-hearted men,
Wearing the crown, the sceptre, and the ring,
As only they unto the purple born
Can wear the symbols of their majesty ;
And most because, with a right royal scorn
Of all things base, thy spirit has been free
From any fear that Truth will leave forlorn
The man who loves and trusts her utterly.

HYMN

WRITTEN FOR MY DIVINITY-SCHOOL GRADUATION.



TERNAL Ruler of the ceaseless round
Of circling planets singing on their way ;
Guide of the nations from the night profound
Into the glory of the perfect day ;
Rule in our hearts, that we may ever be
Guided, and strengthened, and upheld by
Thee.

We are of Thee, the children of Thy love,
The brothers of Thy well-beloved Son ;
Descend, O Holy Spirit, like a dove,
Into our hearts, that we may be as one ;
As one with Thee, to whom we ever tend,
As one with Him, our brother and our friend.

We would be one in hatred of all wrong,
One in our love of all things sweet and fair,
One with the joy that breaketh into song,
One with the grief that trembles into prayer,

One in the power that makes Thy children free
To follow truth, and thus to follow Thee.

Oh, clothe us with Thy heavenly armor, Lord !
Thy trusty shield, Thy sword of love divine ;
Our inspiration be Thy constant word,
We ask no victories that are not Thine ;
Give or withhold, let pain or pleasure be,
Enough to know that we are serving Thee.

CAMBRIDGE, 1864.

HYMN

FOR A FRIEND'S GRADUATION.



ORTH from the calm and still retreat,
Into the world so wide ;
Forth from the gently rocking fleet,
Into the rushing tide.

We know Thy seas are deep and wide,
But all their waves are Thine ;
And over them, our course to guide,
Thy stars for ever shine.

Here have our eyes beheld their light,
Now by it let us fly,
Before the gale and through the night,
To do Thy bidding high ;

To bear our little freight of truth
To every waiting shore ;
To seek beyond the verge of youth,
For ever more and more.

Oh that each had a stancher ship,
A crew more sternly bound,
To follow the horizon's dip
And sail the world around !

CAMBRIDGE, 1868.



A DEDICATION HYMN.



HERE in a corner of Thy house,
Rock-ribbed and built since time began,
And building yet with art divine
Co-working with the art of man,
Our hands, O God, have built a shrine,
Our hearts have vowed to make it Thine.

Here may we come with eager feet,
To sing Thy love and learn Thy law,
And quench our inmost being's thirst
At those deep springs of sacred awe,
Which underneath our being run,
From sources higher than the sun.

Here may the vastness of Thy house
More clearly to our minds appear ;
Its mystery grand and music sweet
Grow ever to our hearts more dear ;
And Thy dear face, the more we yearn,
Through every glowing window burn.

Oh, here may every thought be pure,
And every passion self-controlled ;
Here all our words be kind and true,
And every purpose high and bold :
So shall Thy presence fill the shrine,
And all our hearts and lives be Thine.

1875.

HYMN

FOR A FRIEND'S ORDINATION.



ORD of all visions fair and sweet,
Thy name we praise that here to-day
We welcome one who did not dare,
Thy vision seen, to disobey ;

But up and followed on and on,
Though rough the way and dark the night,
Led ever by that threefold gleam,
The True, the Beautiful, the Right.

It lured him on through many lands ;
Through generations strange and old ;
To Moses with his face aglow,
To Jesus with his lips of gold.

No longer now in cloistered calm
 He feels its influence benign ;
 It leads him forth ; it leads him here,
 To make us his as he is Thine.

Lord of all visions sweet and fair,
 Thou carest not for time or place ;
 Still as of old the promise stands, —
 The pure in heart shall see Thy face.

1870.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY.

Sung at a Festival of the Free Religious Association.



THOU, whose name is blazoned forth
 On our banner's gleaming fold,
 Freedom ! thou whose sacred worth
 Never yet has half been told,
 Often have we sung of thee,
 Dear to us as dear can be.

But to-night we sing of one
 Older, graver far, than thou ;
 With the seal of time begun
 Stamped upon her awful brow :
 Freedom, latest born of time,
 Knowest thou her form sublime ?

She is Duty : in her hand
Is a sceptre heaven-brought ;
Hers the accent of command,
Hers the dreadful, mystic *Ought* ;
Hers upon us all to lay
Heavier burdens every day.

But her bondage is so sweet !
And her burdens make us strong ;
Wings they seem to weary feet,
Laughter to our lips and song :
Freedom, make us free to speed
Wheresoever she may lead.

JUNE, 1876.



LUCRETIA MOTT.



DEAR noble woman, who hast lived so long
And served so well the people's sorest need !
Who still, howe'er thy heart might inly bleed,
Hast ever sung thy cheery household song ;
Turning from strenuous battle against wrong,
With wholesome care thy growing flock to feed,
In pastures green their frolic feet to lead, --
To thee the laurel crown doth well belong ;
For thou hast shown an unbelieving world,
Most womanly of women, that no less
In the hot field where deadly shafts are hurled,
Women may keep their spirit's gentleness,
Than when at home, in soft seclusion curled,
They live unmindful of the world's distress.

PHILADELPHIA, 1878.

WILLIAM HENRY FURNESS.

*Read at the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of his
Settlement in Philadelphia.*



TANDING upon the summit of thy years,
Dear elder brother, what dost thou behold,
Along the way thy tireless feet have come
From that far day, when young and fresh
and bold,
Hearing a voice that called thee from on high,
Thou answeredst quickly, "Father, here am I."

Fain would we see all that thine eyes behold ;
And yet not all, for there is secret store
Of joy and sorrow in each private heart,
To which no stranger openeth the door.
But thou canst speak of many things beside,
While we a little space with thee abide.

Tell us of those who fifty years ago
Started thee forth upon thy sacred quest,
Who all have gone before thee, each alone,
To seek and find the Islands of the Blest.
To-day methinks that there as well as here
Is kept all tenderly thy golden year.

Tell us, for thou didst know and love him well,
Of CHANNING's face, — of those dilating eyes
That seemed to catch, while he was with us here,
Glimpses of things beyond the upper skies.
Tell us of that weak voice, which was so strong
To cleave asunder every form of wrong.

Thou hast had good companions on thy way ;
GANNETT was with thee in his ardent prime,
And with thee still when outward feebleness
But made his spirit seem the more sublime,
Till, like another prophet, summoned higher,
He found, like him, a chariot of fire.

And that beloved disciple was thy friend,
Whose heart was blither than the name he bore,
Who yet could hide the tenderness of MAY,
And, bleaker than December, downward pour
The tempest of his wrath on slavery's lie,
And all that takes from man's humanity.

And thou hast walked with our Saint THEODORE,
Our warrior-saint, well-named the gift of God,
Whose manful hate of every hateful thing
Blossomed with pity, e'en as Aaron's rod,
And lips that cursed the priest and Pharisee
Gathered more honey than the wilding bee.

All these are gone, and SUMNER's heart beneath
Should make more pure the yet untainted snow ;
Our one great statesman of these latter days,
Happy wert thou his other side to know ;
To call him friend, whom ages yet unborn
Shall love tenfold for every breath of scorn.

All these are gone, but one is with us still,
So frail that half we deem she will not die,
But slow exhale her earthly part away,
And wear e'en here the vesture of the sky.
LUCRETIA, blessed among women she,
Dear friend of Truth, and Peace, and Liberty.

And one, whose form is as the Son of Man,
Has been with thee through all these busy years ;
Holden our eyes, and He to us has seemed
As one seen dimly through a mist of tears ;
But thou hast seen Him clearly face to face,
And told us of His sweetness and His grace.

Standing upon the summit of thy years,
Dear elder brother, thou canst see the day
When slavery's curse had sway in all the land,
And thou art here, and that has passed away.
We give thee joy that in its hour of pride
Thy voice and hand were on the weaker side.

But from thy clear and lofty eminence
Let not thine eyes be ever backward turned,
For thou canst see before as cannot we
Who have not yet thy point of vantage earned.
Tell us of what thou seest in the years
That look so strange, seen through our hopes and fears.


Nothing we know to shake thy steadfast mind ;
Nothing to quench thy heart with doubt or fear ;
But higher truth and holier love revealed,
And justice growing to man's heart more dear.
And everywhere beneath high heaven's cope,
A deeper trust, a larger, better hope.

There are some here that shall not taste of death
Till they have seen the kingdom come, with power.
O brave forerunner, wheresoe'er thou art,
Thou wilt be glad with us in that glad hour.
Farewell ! Until we somewhere meet again,
We know in whom we have believed. Amen.

JANUARY 12, 1875.



EZRA STILES GANNETT.

“T eve there shall be light,” the promise runs
In the dear volume that he loved so well,
Ay, and for him the promise was fulfilled,
When rang for him the solemn vesper-bell.

His was no day of sweet, unsullied blue,
And bright, warm sunshine on the grass and flowers,
But many a cloud of loss and grief and pain
Dropped its deep shadow on the fleeting hours.

Clear were his morning hours, and calm and bright;
His sun shot up with splendid fiery beam;
And men were glad and revelled in its light,
And leaped to welcome it from sleep and dream.

Then came a cloud and overshadowed him,
And chilled him with a presage as of death;
And never did it quite forsake his sky,
But sought him often with its eager breath.

For still, though hours were his serene and still,
And radiant hours of steady, glowing noon,
That cloud of pain was ever near to touch
With quivering sadness every brightest boon.

And as his afternoon drew on to eve
And still he lingered in the whitened field, —
The reapers were so few, till night should fall
Fain would his hand the heavy sickle wield, —

Darker it grew and darker o'er the land,
And he was forced to lay his sickle by ;
But did it brighten, then his hand was quick
To seize once more its opportunity.

So the day faded, and the evening came ;
Then from the sky the clouds were furled away,
And a great peace and beauty welcomed in
The evening star with her benignant ray.

And all the air was hushed and whispering,
And all the sky was purely, softly bright ;
And so the blessed promise was fulfilled :
“ At eve,” it said, — “ at eve there shall be light.”

But that fair evening did not end in night,
With shadows deep and darkness all forlorn ;
Just at its brightest he was snatched away
Into the golden palaces of morn.

And surely since the Master went that way,
To welcome there earth's holiest and best,
He has not welcomed one who loved him more
Than he who leaned that evening on his breast.

SEVEN TIMES ELEVEN.



FROM seven times one the tender song went on
To seven times seven, and there made an end ;
But so, thank God, it has not been with thee
And thy good years, O dear and blessed friend !

Thy seven times eight had passed ere first I knew
The kindly welcome of thy pleasant face ;
Thy seven times nine beheld thee full of years,
But yet more full of gentleness and grace.

Then came the goal, — the threescore years and ten ;
Still sang thy heart its sweet and natural song :
“ Labor and sorrow ” ? Nay, to thee I deem
Labor and joy forevermore belong.

For thou hast ever found thy sweetest joy
In simple tasks of love and friendliness ;
Finding, like one to me forever dear,
That naught is easier than to cheer and bless.

And so thy *seven times eleven* comes
And finds thee laboring and loving still ;
Striving, ere yet the day is wholly done,
To fit thy task yet closer to His will.

Work on, love on, in sorrow, yet in joy ;
Another *song of seven* live to sing
Ere, life well spent, thy winter turn at last
To sudden freshness like this month of spring.

Somehow my lyre is broken in these days,
Nor makes the music that it made of yore ;
But 'mid the jar this note at least sounds true :
God's peace be with thee now and evermore !

April 23, 1882.



AULD LANG SYNE.



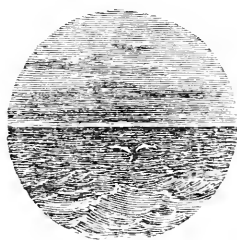
T singeth low in every heart,
We hear it each and all, —
A song of those who answer not,
However we may call ;
'They throng the silence of the breast,
We see them as of yore, —
The kind, the brave, the true, the sweet,
Who walk with us no more.

'Tis hard to take the burden up,
When these have laid it down ;
They brightened all the joy of life,
They softened every frown ;
But, oh, 'tis good to think of them,
When we are troubled sore !
Thanks be to God that such have been,
Although they are no more !

More home-like seems the vast unknown,
Since they have entered there ;

To follow them were not so hard,
Wherever they may fare ;
They cannot be where God is not,
On any sea or shore ;
Whate'er betides, Thy love abides,
Our God, for evermore.

APRIL, 1876.



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